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Featuring
David Noonan
John Simcoe
Kyle Stanley Hunter

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Dungeon

"Those storms build up across six or seven thousand kilometers of flatlands, feed on anything that can give them a push — Coriolis force, other storms, anything that has an ounce of energy in it. They can blow up to seven hundred kilometers an hour, loaded with everything loose that's in their way — sand, dust, everything. They can eat flesh off bones and etch the bones to slivers."

—Frank Herbert, *Dune*

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On the Cover: *James Ryman takes us back to the arid world of Athas with this stunning image of a* Dark Sun *sorcerer queen. The best beauty is cruel beauty, according to all members of the* Dungeon *staff.*

RPGA NETWORK

Dungeon Adventure Player Rewards!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon!* Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 6/30/04. Drop by www.rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:

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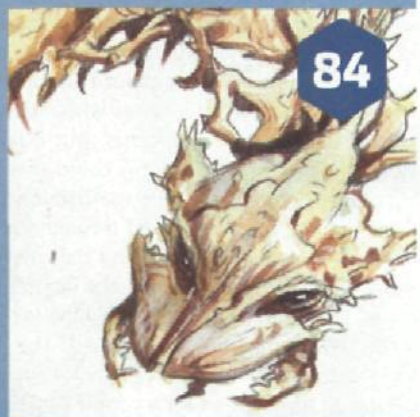

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Match your skill with a blood obsidian scimitar against these creepy critters from the Dark Sun campaign setting.

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Issue 110

Polyhedron: KEEP HOPE ALIVE! *Cover artist James Ryman pulls double duty with our interior* Polyhedron *cover. Snap the chains of bondage in your* Dark Sun *campaign!*

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Erik's Campaign Rules

So I'm working on a new campaign.

I'm not one of those guys who can just sit down and start up a campaign from scratch on a moment's notice. I tried that a few months back, hoping to test out Green Ronin Publishing's new *Mutants & Masterminds* superhero RPG with some buddies. "Make some characters and meet me at Paizo," I said. "I don't have much planned, but it ought to be fun to run a couple of fights."

In the week or so between sending out the invites and running the first session, I developed a fairly intricate mystery for the would-be heroes. They would meet while investigating a traffic disturbance on a major West Coast highway, in which a routine accident would spill a half-dozen supervillains from the back of a nondescript Federal Express truck. Clues unveiled at the site of the accident would lead the heroes to a massive conspiracy in which the government, on the orders of the president of the United States, secretly freed captured supervillains for use in covert wars against leftist governments in Central America. You know, pretty simple stuff.

My great plot lasted about 11 minutes, until *Downer* artist Kyle Hunter showed up with Dogstar, a psionic hero who made Professor X look like the girl from the psychic test scene in *Ghostbusters*. But it wasn't just Dogstar's mental prowess that caused me problems. The guy could also see through walls.

On an investigative trip to Abaddon Asylum, from which one of the villains had been sprung, Dogstar looked through walls to eavesdrop on a phone conversation between the party's contact and the mysterious director of the asylum. I hadn't yet designed the administrator, since I didn't expect the party to get so far so fast. As a result, I had to fall back on placing the (as yet unnamed) director in a lead-lined room protected from psionic exploration. The dodge made me feel dirty inside, and the truth was that I just wasn't ready for everything the heroes could throw at me. The campaign fumbled on for a couple of weeks, but I was completely demoralized.

Erik's Campaign Rule #1: If the PCs in your group can read minds and see through walls, spend a little more than a week designing your world and your impressive, intricate mystery. Jackass.

So I've been spending more time on this new campaign. A lot more time. For starters, I've cut some corners by using Paul Looby's Hardby article (from DUNGEON #109) as the "home base" for my new D&D campaign. Searching for more inspiration, I came across Andrew M. Scott's intriguing "Body of Knowledge: Feeling it in the Bones," in DRAGON #317, and decided to include a couple of NPCs who use prestige classes from that article in some of the seedier streets of my Hardby. Since many of the players in the new game will be from the DRAGON staff, I'm eager to see how much they appreciate their work when it's used to murder their characters.

Erik's Campaign Rule #2: When you're starting out a new campaign, there's no better place to turn for inspiration than DUNGEON & DRAGON magazines.

As Editor-in-Chief of DUNGEON, I see it as my job to provide our readers with useful articles and adventures good for either wholesale importation or simply as a bit of all-important inspiration. I take this charge seriously, because I know I'm not the only one out there starting a new campaign. Here's hoping you enjoy the ride.

Let's get to it.

ERIK

Erik Mona
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KYLE STANLEY HUNTER

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Well, FINALLY

I have subscribed to your magazine for years, and purchased it off the store shelf for years before that. Within many of the last few issues, you have been getting bombarded with e-mail after e-mail to increase the number of adventures in each issue. I would like to offer my two cents... It's about time.

I just received issue #109, and within its pages, you mentioned to both Lance Hawvermale and Brett J. Andersen that the number of adventures will be increasing in the next few issues. This is excellent news.

A long adventure isn't necessarily a good adventure. I have been gaming for a quarter of a century now and have noticed many things about beginning DMs. As people begin their DMing careers, I have noticed that they look for the published modules and adventures from your magazine to make up most of their group's gaming sessions. As time goes on these same DMs, now more experienced, tend to like to make their own adventures, or tweak existing ones, to suit their needs. My point being, it is great if a DM has a couple of huge adventures posted in your magazine to fill in his or her campaign world, but there is a lot more flexibility in taking a couple smaller adventures and combining them into one big adventure yourself.

All the while, you can be tweaking it to fit your campaign world, or to suit your current situation. If there were more, smaller, adventures within the pages of your magazine, DMs would have a limitless supply of "puzzle pieces" to create their own big adventures or even their own campaign world.

Thank you for listening to me. Now it's back to preparation.

Paul Nowak
Via Email

P.S.: A while back, *Dungeon* published a "how-to" on writing adventures to be sent in to your magazine. I would love to see an updated version of that sometime.

Look for the number of adventures we publish each month to increase by issue #114. We've still got a couple of behemoths that we need to clear off our pending submissions pile before we can work our way to the sleek, shorter adventures. It's been difficult to turn down lengthy submissions that have been with the magazine longer than the entire current staff has, but judging by reader response, people want more adventures per issue as soon as possible.

Before we gallop into that wonderland of variety, however, we're going to take a detour for issue #112, which will contain ONE adventure. Thirty years ago, Gary Gygax took his characters Bigby and Mordenkainen through the treacherous dungeons of Rob Kuntz's Maure Castle. In celebration of D&D's creation that same year, we've worked with Rob and Gary to revise and expand Maure Castle for our super-spectacular 30th Anniversary issue.

Maure Castle first appeared in published form with 1984's WG5: Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure. The adventure's grown since then, with an "undiscovered level" from Rob and several completely new monsters, but it's no less "fantastic" than it's ever been. We hope Maure Castle's four dungeon levels find a welcome place on your gaming shelf, and at your gaming table.

We'll be printing revised writers guidelines shortly after issue #114.

Share the Love!

I'm writing this because I think it's time to get this said. And I'm pretty sure there are a lot of DMs and players out there who think the same!

I've been playing D&D for almost 18 years now, and it's become a large and important part of my life. Thanks to D&D, I've read a lot of books about different cultures such as Japan, Central America, and so on. I've read books about Medieval times, poisons, herbs, secret communications, etc. I've learned a lot because of D&D.

Also thanks to D&D, I've met people who later became dearest friends, who normally would've never had a chance of being noticed by me. D&D made me listen to other people and it made me even more tolerant!

For all this, I just want to say THANK YOU to all those people working on my most beloved game! From Gary Gygax to Keith Baker, and to all those guys who constantly work, invent, write, create, and put their blood into this hobby: Sean K Reynolds, Monte Cook, Stan!, Tim Brown, Troy Denning, James Jacobs, Larry Elmore and everyone else. Thanks also to the players of the game and especially to fellow DMs who create adventures, even if the time to play them may

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never come! And, of course, to the editors of *Dungeon* and *Dragon*...

It's just great to be part of this "not so secret society" of creatures who talk about temples of evil, deeds of goodness, and heroic characters, while some of the uninitiated just give out looks of "what the hell are you talking about?"

By the way, I think "Dead Man's Quest," from *Dungeon* #107 will give all those guys who don't like both magazines fused together something to chew on! I look forward to seeing adventures from other companies like Green Ronin in *Polyhedron* in the future!

My only critique? The number of adventures per issue is "at an all time low," if I may say so! In the past, we got more adventures per issue than we get now! What's up with that?

Tom Ganz
Biblis, Germany

What's up with that is the magazine is nearly half the size it used to be (though it comes out twice as often). Plus stat blocks take up a lot more room, etc., etc., etc. See the last twelve letters columns for more justification, but the upshot is that things are about to change to a format friendlier to those clamoring for more adventures. My official prediction: Five months from now, these pages will be filled with readers asking where the longer adventures went. You can't please everyone all the time, but it's certainly fun to try.

Aquatic Half-Elf vs. the Zombies

Just dropping a line to say: your mag rocks! Our DM uses adventures from *Dungeon*, so usually about a month after I buy it I finally open and read my copy to find out the other ways things could have gone. So. Much. FUN!

Combined with *Dragon* it's even more fun. I'm the only one in my group who buys it, including the DM, so I of course take every advantage. Using my aquatic half-elf during "Tammeraut's Fate" (#106) was too cool!

Seriously, though, your standard of adventures is excellent! Looking forward to more excellent adventures, and I can't WAIT to finally read the latest issue...

Hugs, Sin-Chan
Via Email

Enough with the Half-Dragons!

I've been a subscriber to *Dungeon* since issue #32 and have since gotten all issues save for five of the earlier ones. I've never written to you before and am doing so simply to express some opinions on the more recent format changes.

Dungeon **Content:** The number of adventures per issue bothers me not—as long as the quality of the adventures remains high, which I feel it has. I don't run 3rd Edition since I have a long-running game which is a hybrid of AD&D 2nd Edition and ICE's *Rolemaster*. My constant pool of 5–8 players loves my creation (ages ranging from 15—my daughter—to 50—my brother), including a computer trouble-shooter and a marine archeologist. That being said, any adventure I pick from your mag must be good and worth my time to modify. What world the adventure is set in matters little to me as long as it fits into the fantasy genre.

Half-Dragons: I am a bit tired of the plethora of half-dragons which have been appearing quite frequently of late. Especially when a story arc is designed around them. I can usually find a lower planar creature to substitute for the occasional appearance of these creatures but I will never, ever run one in my campaign.

Maps of Mystery: Which I love; but lately we have been seeing titled ones such as "Red Dragon Lair" and "Stone Giant Caves." Not much mystery there! That being said, I love the maps which are used in your adventures throughout. Even if an adventure doesn't appeal to me I can usually salvage a map or two to be utilized later in one of my own adventures.

Polyhedron: When it first appeared as part of your dual format I wasn't impressed, but this has changed. When it includes features such as "Living Greyhawk" (my home world since 1981) and Greyhawk expansions such as "The Bright Desert" or the "City of Hardby," or on a different track, the *Delta Green* mini adventure (I love Pagan Publishing materials), then you have my attention. I also like the Global Positioning maps, which I can utilize in what I consider to be the finest modern horror RPG: Atlas Games' "Unknown Armies." All I can say is keep it coming.

Bruce MacDonald
Pittsfield, MA

Not much to add to this except to mention that we're sick of half-dragons, too. Don't expect to see many more of them over the next year.

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Submissions: Interested in writing for the magazine? Download our submission guidelines by visiting the ***Dungeon*** homepage at www.paizo.com/dungeon.

Here be Dragons...

In *Dungeon* #108, Jason Brisbane wants to know what's off the map?

Well, I do, too, Jason! This is a bug that's afflicted me for nearly 25 years. Ever since I saw my very first D&D world map way back in module X1, *Isle of Dread* in 1981, I've wondered what lies off the explored pages of paper. When I see a campaign map, I study it, soaking in every detail, but also wonder what lies beyond. What's on the other side of the Northern Mountain Range? What mysterious continent is on the other side of the ocean? Who will I meet if my characters follow the river in the forest to unexplored territory?

As DMs, we get to answer our own questions. We get to decide what else is out there. You can take a pre-written adventure or Map of Mystery and drop it into an existing campaign, where the answers might already be known. You might use it as the only known area of a brand new continent and fill in details later. I myself used the map in "Rana Mor" (#86) as the starting point for an exotic jungle-filled continent to the far south of my main campaign area. You might even use that adventure or map as the base of operations for a group of characters and build an entirely new world from that one piece of paper. That last one is unlikely, and undoubtedly challenging, but definitely possible.

The answer, then, is a very simple one. What lies off the map? You tell me!

Tyler Jones
Peoria, AZ

Just Answer the Question!

After reading your response to Japji Khalsa this month, I feel the need to go to de-lurk mode and take a stand. You failed to respond to his comments on the inclusion of *Polyhedron* into a formerly great magazine. I agree with Japji that *Polyhedron* is "useless." If there's anyone out there who's even played "Death Net," I'd be shocked, let alone that awful Britney and the Pussycats thing.

As a reader since issue 12, and an on/off subscriber (I haven't missed an issue, regardless of the method), I've need to say that *Polyhedron* has got to go. I subscribed recently for three years, knowing that I'd get a magazine of remarkable quality and great entertainment. Unfortunately, within a few months, *Polyhedron* became part of the picture. While I have read about the business decisions behind the inclusion, I still felt a bit betrayed at the outcome.

I don't mind that the price has risen. I'm willing to pay a bit more for the quality you've proven you can output. However, I'm still paying for something I don't want. I respect the talent and dedication it takes to put *Polyhedron* together every month, but I don't want it. I would much rather get a smaller *Dungeon* for a slightly cheaper price, or go back to a larger bi-monthly publication. Seven dollars for two adventures just isn't going to cut it for me, even though I know I'm paying a bit less with the subscription.

It's going to be difficult to vote with my wallet when that renewal notice arrives again; this time it's going to take some serious consideration, rather than popping off a check immediately.

The *Dungeon* adventures overall have been excellent. While I haven't liked every single one, I must admit you're batting about .950. You make a great product when you stick to what's still listed on the cover: "Official Dungeons & Dragons Adventures." The content in that section is without peer.

So, on *Polyhedron*: move it to a website, send it as an e-zine, push it as an internet pop-up, but for Cuthbert's sake, get it out of *Dungeon*. Kill it, stomp it, squish it, but please, please remove it.

...and while you're at it, chain Willie Walsh to a workstation and turn the screws on him 'til he puts out another adventure!

Dean Itzen
Seattle, WA

This issue's "Prison Mail" was getting a little boring without the obligatory Polyhedron hate mail. Dean, you're definitely not alone, and your message has been heard loud and clear.

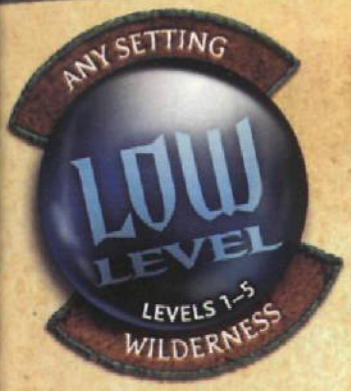
DON'T MISS DUNGEON #111!

Dungeon provides the very best in official Dungeons & Dragons adventures every single month! Next issue's offerings include:

Lords of Oblivion
By Christopher Perkins
The **Shackled City Adventure Path** enters the home stretch as the forces of evil take direct action against the heroes of Cauldron. Dangerous secrets will be revealed, important NPCs will bite the dust, and your heroes will never know who to trust again! **BONUS:** Take a glimpse at the campaign's villains in our special "Faces of Cauldron" art feature. A D&D adventure for 13th-level characters.

Strike on the *Rabid Dawn*
By Frank Brunner
A terrible thunderstorm batters a seaside port, yet thunder and lightning are nothing compared to what is about to be unleashed by the diabolic crew of the *Rabid Dawn*. A D&D adventure for 15th-level characters.

***Polyhedron* #170**
Don't miss *Polyhedron's* Star Wars, *d20 Modern*, and Living Greyhawk content, coming your way in 30 days!



THE BUZZ IN THE BRIDGE

BY JOHN SIMCOE

ARTWORK BY JEFF CARLISLE • CARTOGRAPHY BY ROB LAZZARETTI

"The Buzz in the Bridge" is a D&D adventure suitable for four 3rd-level characters. This short adventure can be set in any temperate mountain wilderness.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The isolated halfling hamlet of Lindley has a problem. The main supply route into town, a large covered bridge spanning a mountain chasm, has been infested by a hive of giant bees. The sheriff has already perished in an attempt to remove the vermin, so when the PCs arrive in town, mayor Dunleary Appletop pleads for their help.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure begins as the PCs arrive in Lindley on a path from the opposite side of town from the bridge. As they make arrangements for the night, Brindel Butterstitch, the owner of the village's only inn, urges the PCs to visit with the mayor.

The mayor meets with the PCs and pleads with them for help against the giant bees. He explains that the insects have already killed the town sheriff. As a reward, the mayor offers a few minor magic items.

Naturally, the mayor doesn't want the hive set ablaze, since the bridge itself is made of wood. The PCs must either eliminate the vermin without resorting to fire, or "convince" them to leave the bridge to find a new nesting site.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can choose from among the following hooks to get the PCs involved in the story.

- The characters, traveling through the mountains for some other purpose, arrive in town the night after Lindley's sheriff is slain by the bees. The mayor asks for the characters' help in taking care of the bee menace.
- Word of Lindley's bee problem has reached a neighboring town by way of a halfling named Shim Longbranch. Shim is a hunter from Lindley who was asked to go for help after the sheriff was slain. The players may hear of Lindley's plight from Shim. Alternately, a ranger or druid PC is asked by a superior to take care of the bee problem in some way that doesn't harm the bees.

THE HAMLET OF LINDLEY

> The sun is high in the cloudless sky, and the wind is calm. A few small halfling children frolick on the rustic path. Two are girls wearing brightly colored dresses which they use as makeshift baskets to carry flowers. Behind them is a younger boy. He carries two tiny buckets of water, most of which is sloshing out as he swings them back and forth.

As the PCs approach, the children notice them and give out squeals of excitement. They run up to the PCs and say the following:

> "You're here! You're here!" yells a little halfling girl as she approaches. "You're gonna kill the big, mean bugs aren't you?"
>
> "We picked these flowers for you," says the other, proudly displaying her harvest of petals.

The two eight-year-old girls, Aiggie and Cat, walk with the adventurers as they approach town. The six-year-old boy, Paige, takes a good look at the adventurers and then runs up ahead of them toward Lindley, yelling "They're here! They're here!"

Aiggie and Cat are happy to answer what questions they can as they encourage the PCs to hasten into town. Likely questions and answers are given below.

What's going on with the big, mean bugs? "Some giant bugs have made a nest in the bridge on the far side of town. The sheriff went to get rid of them, but they stung him and he fell down and died."

Did anyone else try to stop them? "Some guys, even Paige's papa, tried to get 'em, but they just got hurt."

What's your town like? "Lindley? We're all halflings, and there's more than a hundred of us living there. Most of our moms and dads make wine that we sell down the road, but we can't do that anymore 'cause the bugs are in the bridge."

Were you expecting someone to come and help? "Our best hunter, Shim Longbranch, went out a week ago. He

was going to go to another town and find someone to help us. But you know him already, right? He sent you, right?"

If the PCs were sent by Shim or know of him, the girls take them directly to the mayor. Otherwise, they take the adventurers to the Sungrass Nook, Lindley's only inn and tavern.

As the PCs round a corner in the road, Lindley comes into view.

> The tiny hamlet of Lindley contains two streets that form a crossroads in a rustic mountain valley. Yondalla Lane and Grape Street are each clearly and proudly marked by signs that hang above the crossroad from chains suspended between buildings.
>
> The village itself consists of approximately thirty small buildings and huts, most of which are sized for halflings. Only seven buildings look to be more accommodating toward larger folk. The largest building looms over the town to the north, and judging by the large vineyards that stretch up the mountainside beyond, it must be a winery.

As the PCs pass through town they are greeted by happy cheers as the townsfolk, assuming they're the heroes Shim gathered, shout out supportive calls like, "Yondalla's blessings!" or "Them bees are as good as dead!" or even "A free meal to the one who brings me back a set o'them gossamer wings!"

♛ **Lindley (hamlet)**: Conventional; AL NG; 100 gp limit*; Assets 600 gp; Population 120; Isolated (halfling 100%).

*Although riding dogs are technically above Lindley's gp limit, there are about a dozen of them for sale in town.

Authority Figures: Mayor Dunleary Appletop (male halfling Com2/Clr1); Deputy Alexus Oakpad (female War2).

Important Characters: Brindel Butterstitch, Com2 (owner of the Sungrass Nook, Lindley's only inn); Nicky Zelno, Exp3 (Winemaker); Allan Oakpad, male Exp2 (hunter).

Others: Town militia War1 (5); winemakers Exp1 (30); dog trainers Exp1 (5); Com1 (74).

Businesses: Sungrass Nook (tavern and inn); Merle's (cooper), Lindley Smithy (weaponmaker and blacksmith), The Blackberry (herbalist), Allyson Feeds (animal food, stables, riding dog breeder and trainer), Zelno Butchery (butcher), and Zelno Wines (winery).

SUNGRASS NOOK

Lindley's only inn provides lodging for travelers, with a night's stay costing only 5 sp. A meal of hearty stew, bread, and wine from Zelno Wines costs 3 sp. The PCs are currently the only overnight patrons.

The building is two stories tall and has four rooms available for rent on the second floor. The main floor houses a small restaurant, bar, and kitchen. While the Sungrass Nook is made to accommodate Medium creatures, its restaurant seating is built with Lindley residents in mind. Medium visitors typically sit on cushions on the floor in the common room.

The innkeeper is named Brindel Butterstitch. He wastes no time in approaching the PCs and asks them to help out the residents of Lindley by killing the giant bees who've made a hive on Canyon Bridge. He can answer the following questions:

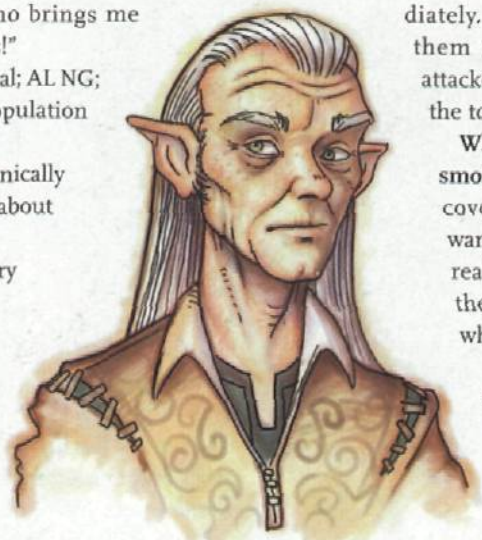
What's the deal with the bugs/bees? "Some giant bees, and I mean bees twice as big as me, have attacked the winery. I guess the scouts found their hive inside the Canyon Bridge on the other side of town."

Have the bugs killed anyone? "Yeah, Sheriff Wickham. They stabbed him with their stingers, pumped him full'a poison, dragged him off the bridge, and dropped him into the canyon. Can't get much more dead than that, the poor guy!"

Has anyone survived the attacks? "Well, when they go after the winery, everybody just flees immediately. Some of the militia tried to drive them out of the bridge, but they got attacked and hurt. Most of them are still at the town hall recuperating."

Why doesn't someone burn the hive or smoke the bees out? "The hive's inside a covered bridge, so I guess they don't wanna burn it down. And it's always been really windy in the canyon, so I reckon there's no way to get the smoke to do what you want and stay in the bridge."

Is there a reward for killing/sending the bees away? "Yeah, but after the incident with the sheriff and the militia, the mayor said we needed professional help. Our town's small enough as it is. We don't want it any smaller."



Brindel Butterstitch

Brindel leads the PCs over to the mayor's house as soon as they agree to help out.

THE MAYOR'S PLEA

> The town hall stands just about 20 feet tall, yet has three floors. Ribbons attached to the windowsills flutter in the wind as a reminder of some past festival. A set of double doors just over four feet tall provides the only entrance into the building.

Mayor Appletop

When the PCs arrive, Mayor Appletop comes out to greet them. He is pleased to see them, welcoming them with smiles and flattery. He takes pains to talk with each party member, liberally dropping compliments throughout. Although his near manic desire to talk up the PCs makes him sound a bit unhinged, he is in fact simply desperate to ensure the PCs stick around and help kill the bees.

Creature: Dunleary Appletop is not only Lindley's mayor, but also the hamlet's only healer. There has been talk many times over the past several years of constructing a church of Yondalla in town, but so far nothing has come of it. Lindley is a quiet town, and apart from accidents and the rare patch of bad weather, there simply hasn't been much need for a healer's touch here.

The arrival of the giant bees caught everyone off guard. Dunleary has turned the town hall into a makeshift hospital to treat all the townsfolk who have been injured in bee-related incidents. If the PCs wish to visit the infirmary, they find four militia members still in their sickbeds. All four kept the stingers with which they were stung, and proudly show them off to anyone who seems even passably interested in their story.

Mayor Dunleary Appletop, Male Halfling Com2/Clr1: CR 2; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 2d4+1d8; hp 12; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk/Full Atk +5 ranged (1d3, sling) or +2 melee (1d3/19–20, dagger); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +3 Will +5; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Heal +4, Jump –4, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Use Rope +4.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Combat Casting.

Languages: Common, Halfling.

Spells Prepared (3/2+1; save DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*detect poison, guidance, purify food and drink*; 1st—*comprehend languages, magic stone, sanctuary**.

*Domain Spell. *Domains*: Good (cast good spells at +1 caster level), Protection (protective ward grants +5 resistance bonus on next save, 1/day).

Possessions: Small sling, 10 bullets, Small dagger, *ring of protection +1*, two doses of *silversheen*, two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 42 gp, 29 sp.

Development: After his initial greetings and compliments, Dunleary gets down to business. He asks the PCs to kill or drive off the giant bees that have nested in Canyon Bridge. The giant insects have also been raiding the hamlet's primary business, the winery, where they devour the halflings' grape crop and drink the juice.

The mayor is unsure just how many bees are in the hive, but believes there could be dozens. He's seen up to six at a time, and the sheriff, the militia, and residents of town have killed at least dozen of them so far.

He doesn't care how the PCs get rid of the bees, as long as they don't damage any town property in the process. This includes the bridge, the only route over the nearby gorge for many miles in either direction.

As a reward for taking the dangerous job, he offers the PCs his *ring of protection +1* and both of his *potions of cure moderate wounds*. If the PCs ask for more, he throws in his two doses of *silversheen*, but beyond that he has little to give. Additionally, the mayor promises to write the PCs an official proclamation in honor of their deeds.

The mayor has arranged for the PCs to be guided to the bridge by Deputy Alexus Oakpad and her husband, Allan Oakpad, tomorrow morning. Until then, the PCs can rest and clean up at the Sungrass Nook or talk with a few of the militia members that are still in the infirmary.

ATTACK AT ZELNO WINES (EL 3)

About an hour after the PCs speak with the mayor and the wounded members of the militia, an alarm bell sounds at Zelno Wines. As the bell sounds, all of the villagers rush off the streets into whatever building is nearest. Any villagers near the PCs can tell them in terrified tones that the bells signal that the bees are raiding the winery again. If the PCs don't respond to the alarm, Brindel Butterstitch, the Sungrass Nook's owner, comes looking for them and tells them about the trouble.

Zelno Wines consists of two structures, a main building and a juicing tank. Behind these a vast vineyard stretches out on the hillside above the winery. The main building is two stories tall and can accommodate Medium creatures with ease. On the ground level of the main building large vats for filtering juice from the grape pulp can be found. This floor also houses the winery's barrel-filling equipment.

While most of Zelno Wines' product is sold by the barrel, some of the finer wines are packaged in smaller, expensive bottles. The equipment for creating these bottles, filling

them, and their unique and hand-made labels are found on the upper floor of the main building.

The main building's cellar consists of a vast cavern where the grape juice is fermented.

Creatures: Four giant bees cling to Zelno Wines' juicing tank, where they feast on the freshly mashed grapes inside. The bees move in tight circles as they shake their abdomens and buzz their wings in excitement. Long tongues dart in and out of their mouths as they lap up the sugary juice. The bees take no heed to the grape-stained halfling workers who watch the spectacle from the windows of the winery. Nor do they react to the characters, as long as they are not attacked or approached within 30 feet.

Giant Bees (4): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 284.

Tactics: If attacked or approached too closely, the bees fight to defend themselves and their food. A bee reduced to fewer than 6 hit points retreats to the hive.

Development: If the PCs kill or drive off the giant bees, Nicky Zelno, the owner of the winery (and the nearby butchery), offers them a reward of a bottle of fine wine for each bee killed. Each bottle is worth 50 gp.

APPROACHING THE HIVE

The following day, Deputy Alexus Oakpad and her husband Allan escort the PCs about a mile outside of town to Canyon Bridge. You can use Alexus and Allan Oakpad as you see fit. If the PCs had difficulty fighting the bees at the winery, the halflings can help them fight the bees in the hive. If the PCs are stronger, the Oakpads hang back during the fight and let the heroes do the heroic stuff. They can step in to save the PCs if things turn sour during a combat.

Sheriff Wickham

Deputy Alexus Oakpad, Female Halfling War2: CR 1; HD 2d8; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp –2; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d4/19–20, Small masterwork short sword) or +6 ranged (1d3, Small sling); SA —; SQ halfling traits; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +5, Handle Animal +5, Jump –2, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Swim +2.

Feat: Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Gnome, Halfling.

Alexus Oakpad

Allan Oakpad

Possessions: *+1 Small chain shirt*, Small masterwork short sword, Small sling, 10 bullets, *potion of cure light wounds*.

Allan Oakpad, Male Halfling Exp2: CR 1; HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp –2; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, *+1 Small heavy mace*) or +4 ranged (1d3, Small sling); SA —; SQ halfling traits; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +5, Heal +4, Hide +7, Jump –4, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +3, Survival +4, Swim +2, Use Rope +3.

Feat: Track.

Languages: Common, Gnome, Halfling.

Possessions: Small masterwork chain shirt, *+1 Small heavy mace*, Small sling, 20 bullets.

THE HIVE (EL 4+)

The covered bridge spans a 130-foot-wide canyon. Supported below by an intricate network of support beams, the 20-foot-wide bridge is sided with wood paneling and roofed with slate wedges.

The entrance to the bridge seems to be covered with a thick shell of gray-colored wax, except for a 5-foot-wide hole at its base.

A miniatures-scale map of the bridge and several bee encounter tokens appear near the end of this adventure. Permission is granted to photocopy these elements for personal use only.

The covered bridge is made of wood, secured with wood peg nails and thousands of feet of rope. The bridge's peaked roof reaches 25 feet in the center and 15 feet along the walls. The slate-shingled roof is fairly slick, and a successful Balance check (DC 12) is required to walk along it.

Below, the canyon floor is 100 feet down; the sheer sides of the walls are fairly smooth and dangerous to scale. A successful Climb check (DC 20) is required to move up or down the cliffs. The canyon stretches about 10 miles in each direction and a narrow stream runs along the bottom.

Creatures: Twenty giant bees can be found in the hive; any bees killed in the attack on Zelno Wines earlier in the adventure should be deducted from this total. It's unlikely that all 20 bees are in and around the hive during the day, as more than half forage for food and nectar at this time.

A single giant bee is always stationed at the entrance to the hive. If anyone walks within 50 feet of the entrance, the bee attacks. Each round of combat, make a collective Listen check for the bees in the hive. The bees have a +1 bonus to their check, and the DC to hear a battle outside of the hive is DC 10. If the bees inside the hive hear the battle, a group of five bees emerges from the hive to defend it.

Giant Bees (20 total): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 284.

Tactics: No more than five bees attempt to attack the party at once. Remaining bees gather at the hive entrance and wait as they assess the progress of their kin.

If the PCs defeat the alarmed bees, those gathered at the entrance remain on high alert for the next hour, but won't attack unless the PCs focus their assault on the hive. After an hour of high alert, the bees return to their normal activities, including posting the single guard bee at the hive entrance.

Once the hive is attacked again, the cycle resumes. Wounded bees send out a pheromone warning, five bees attack any perceived threat and the remaining bees guard the hive entrance.

The characters could try to enter the hive from the far (unguarded) side of the bridge. Characters can climb along the side of the bridge with a successful Climb check (DC 15), or move along the roof of the bridge with a successful Balance check (DC 12) after they manage to climb up to it. Once they reach the far side they must find a way through the wax before entering the hive.

Instead of killing the bees, the PCs can try to drive the bees off by smoking them out of the bridge. This tactic is more difficult than it may at first seem, however, since the canyon and bridge region are often quite windy. Winds in the region are usually strong, but there's a 25% chance each day that the winds die down to moderate (see page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information about wind effects). Gathering the right kind of wood and materials to make such a fire takes an hour of work and a successful Survival check (DC 15). A separate fire must be lit within 25 feet of both sides of the bridge; if the PCs only light one fire, the bees simply wall up that side of the hive and create a new opening on the other side.

Once the fires are lit, a second successful Survival check (DC 20) is required to keep the smoke flowing into the hive. 1d6 of these checks must be made in succession over the course of several hours (one check per hour) before the bees abandon the hive, leaving the old queen behind to fend for herself. If any of these Survival checks fail by 5 or more, a group of five bees comes out of the hive to attack. If one of these checks fails by 10 or more, the fire gets out of control and begins to burn the bridge.

Wax Wall: 1 ft. thick; hardness 0; hp 24 per 10-ft. section; Break DC 23. *Note*: Wax suffers full (not half) damage from fire.

Covered Wooden Bridge: Hardness 5; hp 150 per 5-ft. section; Break DC 28.

Treasure: Sheriff Wickham's body remains down in the canyon. On the remains of the dead halfling are a *Small +1 greatsword*, a Small masterwork throwing axe, and a gold necklace worth 120 gp. If the PCs return Wickham's body to town, the mayor insists that the PCs keep these items as an additional reward.

Ad-Hoc XP Award: If the PCs manage to drive off the bees without actually killing them, award them experience points as if they defeated the creatures in combat.

INSIDE THE HIVE (EL 4+)

Attacking the bees inside the hive itself might seem like the most dangerous tactic of them all, but in fact it may be the best tactic since it restricts the bees' movement and prevents them from using flight to gain an advantage. Nonetheless, the Oakpads want nothing to do with an assault on the interior of the hive, and even if they helped the PCs fight bees outside they won't accompany them into the hive itself.

Once the PCs enter the hive, the bees attack them in one monstrous wave. If the PCs can make their way past the worker bee chamber and into the grub and honey chambers, the narrow confines of the hive limit the number of bees that can attack at once.

More than fifty hexagonal chambers containing grubs in various stages of development can be found in the hive. The grubs themselves are harmless.

Creature: The queen bee herself can be found in the depths of the hive. She never leaves this chamber, and immediately attacks any intruders.

If the PCs enter the queen's chamber by hacking through the western wax wall and enough bees still remain alive, a group of 1d4 bees guards the queen.

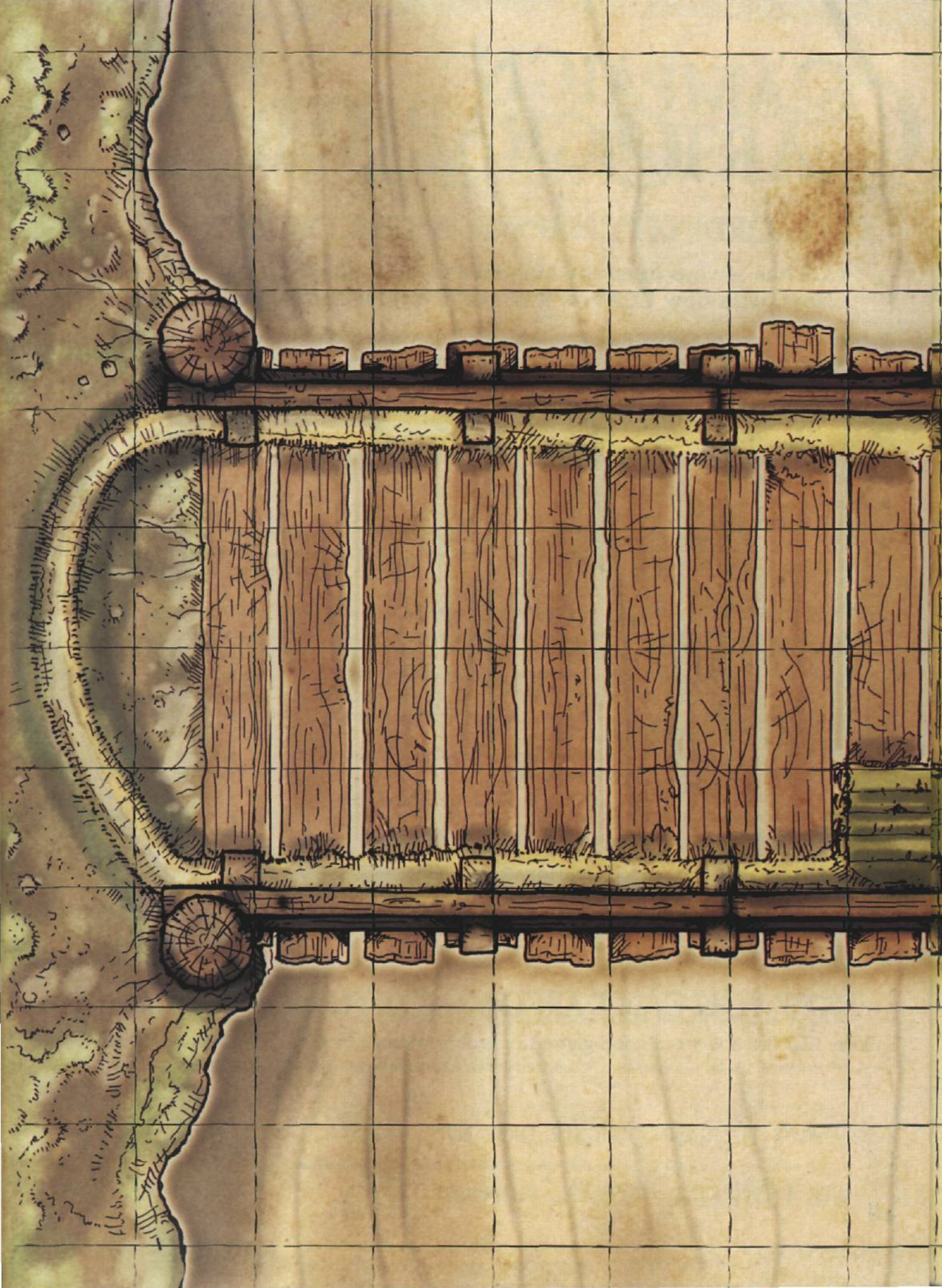
Queen Bee, Advanced Giant Bee: CR 3; Large vermin; HD 7d8+14; hp 54; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (good); AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +13; Atk/Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+6 plus poison, sting); SA poison; SQ darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 15, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 9.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

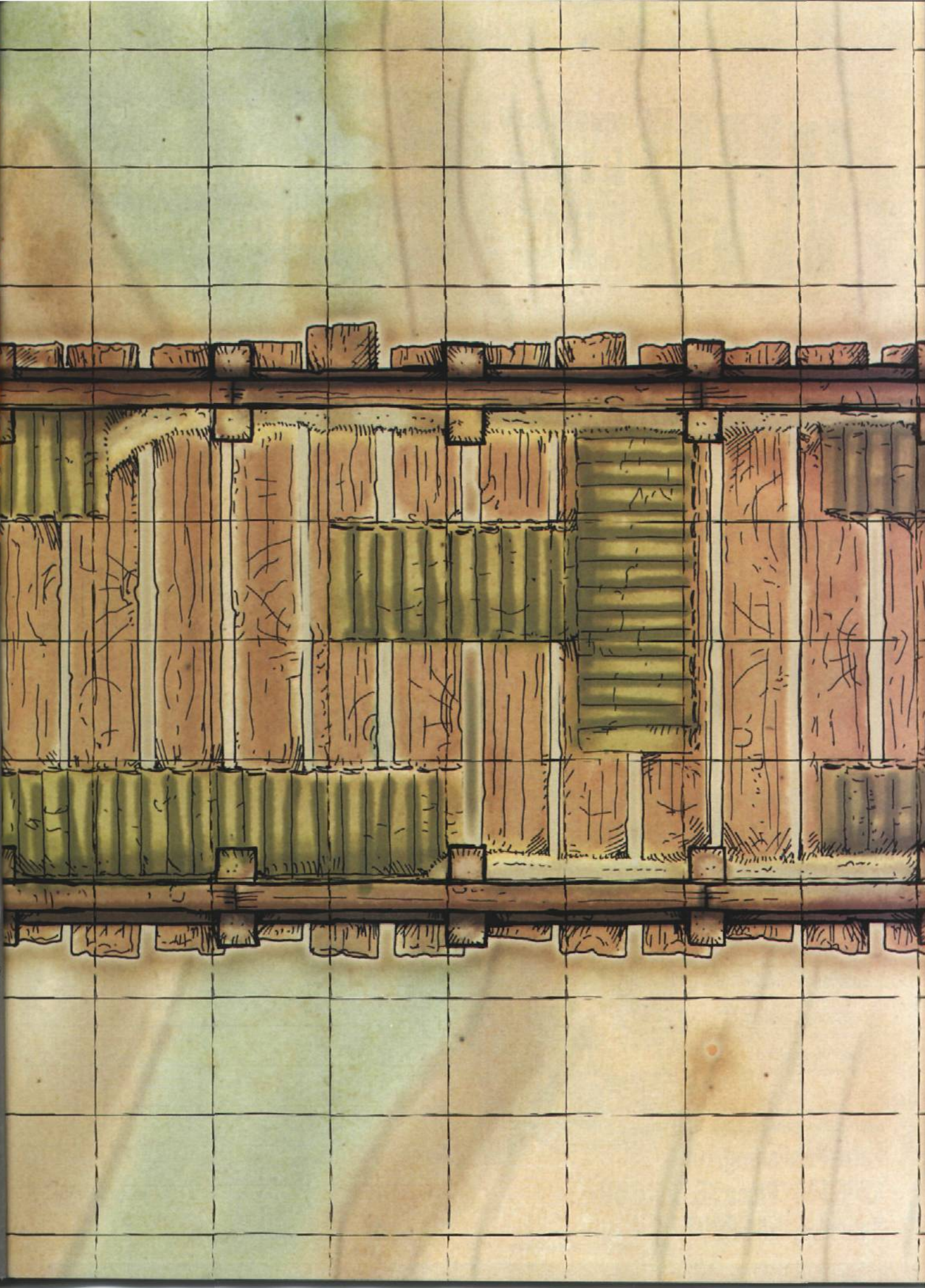
Although this adventure is designed for four 3rd-level characters, it can be adapted for higher and lower levels.

1st- and 2nd-level characters: The queen should be reduced to 4 Hit Dice, and all bee attacks should come in waves of two, or at the most, three bees at a time.

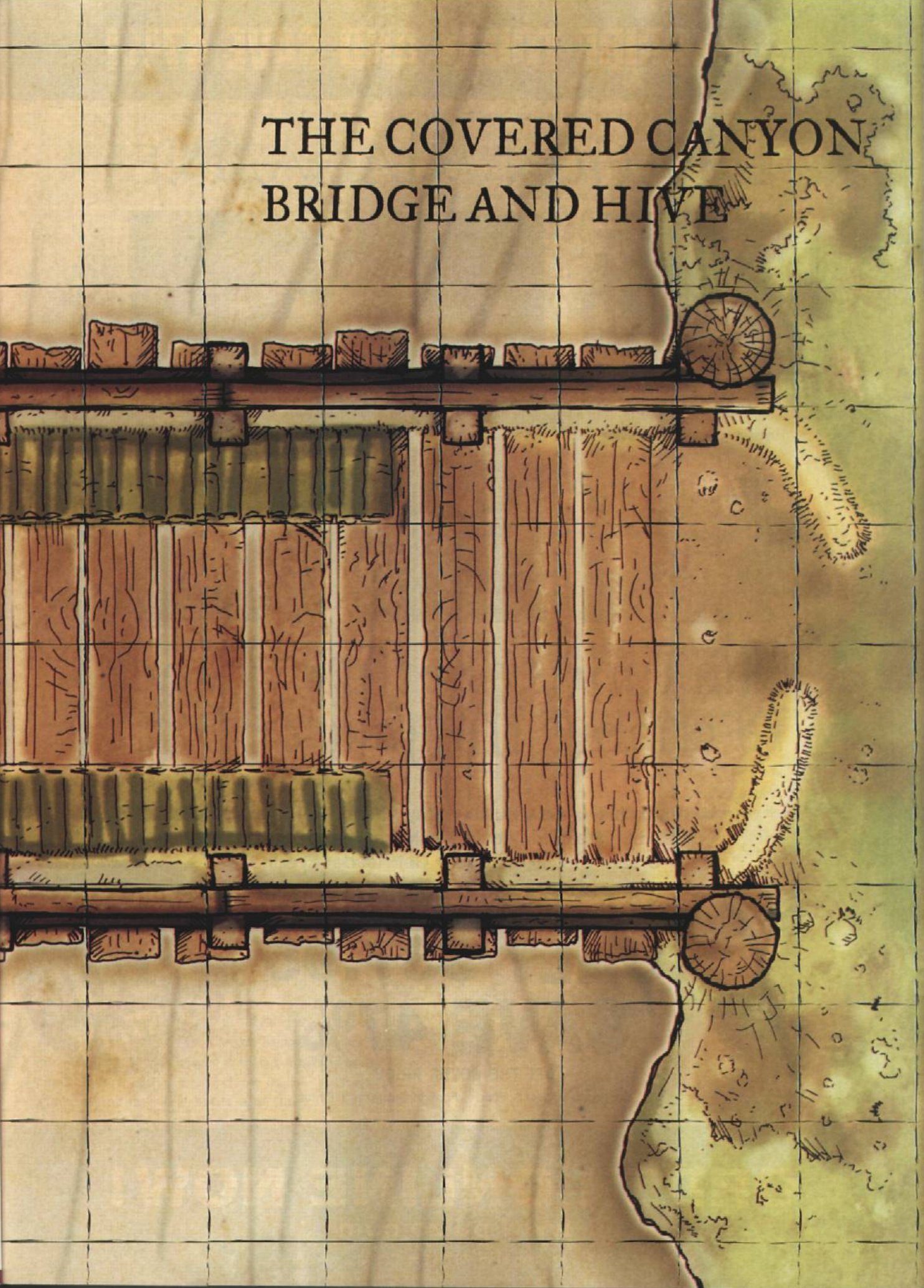
4th- through 6th-level characters: Replace the bees with giant wasps. These vermin are much stronger than bees, so they should only attack the PCs in waves of two or three wasps at a time. Alternately, you can give the half-dragon template to the bees, but again, you should limit the number of half-dragon bees that attack the PCs at any one time.



Wax Walls



THE COVERED CANYON BRIDGE AND HIVE



Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con. The queen bee can sting multiple times with her stinger without dying, unlike a standard giant bee.

Skills: Spot +5, Survival +1 (+5 to orient location).

Treasure: The center of the hive contains a huge amount of honey. In all, there are 100 gallons of honey that can be harvested from the hive; honey is worth 8 sp per gallon.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the bees are vanquished or driven off, the halfling villagers thank the PCs for their help. The next day, the halflings begin cleaning up the dead bees and remaining wax, and resume using the bridge for trade shortly thereafter.

Dunleary Appletop quickly provides a letter of commendation for their valiant efforts. If the PCs show any dignitary within 100 miles the letter, they earn a one-encounter +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks with that dignitary.

While this adventure is designed to be a simple "man vs. nature" scenario, DMs can add a villain to expand it. Two possible villains follow.

The Beekeeper: Some sort of "beekeeper" is responsible for placing the bees at the Canyon Bridge. The PCs could possibly track the beekeeper to its lair from the bridge. If the PCs don't bother to search for tracks, the beekeeper storms Lindley a few hours after the hive has been destroyed, enraged at the slaughter of his precious hive.

The beekeeper can be any creature or NPC, but since the bees themselves are giant-sized, a Large creature is ideal to serve in this role. For lower-level parties, use a small pack of spriggans (*Fiend Folio* 162); for mid-level parties, use an ogre mage or an ettin. Higher-level parties find that a group of hill giants "planted" the queen in the bridge so that she and her workers build a hive that will give them easy access to honey.

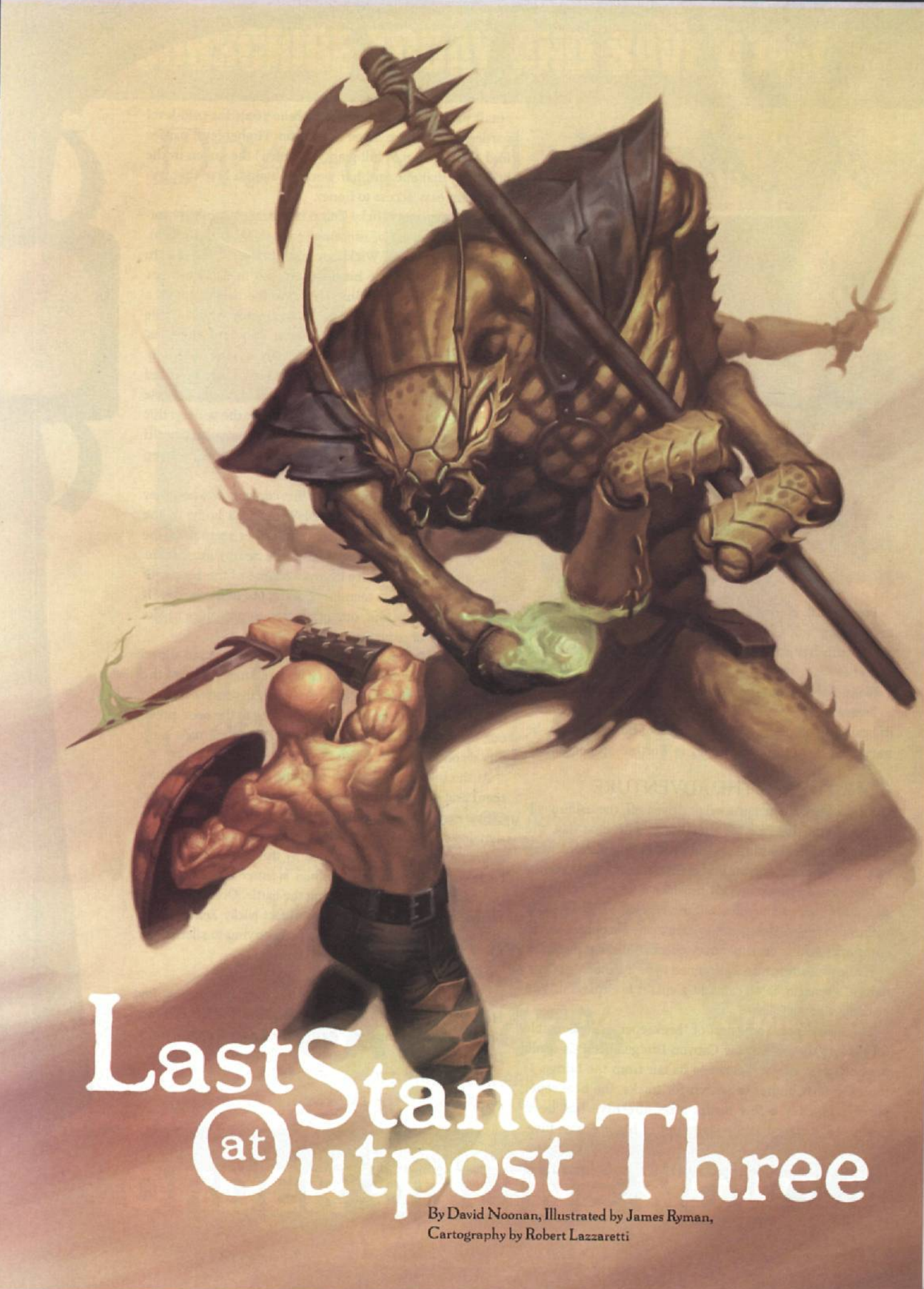
The Conspiracy: Nicky Zelno is actually a 5th-level sorcerer with a *wand of summon monster III* (12 charges). Shortly after Sheriff Wickham first discovered the hive in the mountains, Zelno hit upon an idea to use giant bee honey to sweeten his wine. He drove the bees out with a fire and magic in order to get to the honey within. Little did he know at the time that he not only took the bees' normal honey, but the hive's royal jelly, a honey-like substance the bees use to "crown" new queens. Once he added the royal jelly to his new batch of wine, the bees became obsessed with finding the new "queen" in the winery; this explains their curiosity toward the juicing tanks. Sheriff Wickham figured it out, and Zelno killed him to keep from losing his business.

The PCs can start to uncover this conspiracy when they discover a notebook on Sheriff Wickham's body. In the notebook, the sheriff writes that these bees seem to be the same ones he recently surveyed in the nearby mountains. He's sure of this because he marked one of the bees with some paint, and he's seen it operating out of the bridge. If the PCs check this out, one of the bee corpses does in fact have a swipe of paint on it.

When the PCs return to Lindley, Deputy Oakpad allows them to look over Wickham's nature survey notes; the prospect of another hive of bees nearby distresses him. In the survey notes they find a map leading to the bees' previous hive; Deputy Oakpad wants the PCs to go make sure this second hive isn't active.

At the hive, they find the remains of the old bee settlement and some burnt wood used to smoke out the bees. Close inspection reveals that the wood is actually the remains of several Zelno Wines barrels. On their way back to town, the PCs are ambushed by three dretches, who've been summoned using *summon monster III*. As combat begins, a halfling is seen fleeing the battle. Observant characters realize that the halfing is in fact Nicky Zelno. If the PCs survive, Zelno spares no expense trying to silence the PCs before they can expose his crimes. Ω

John Simcoe was inspired to write this story after reading Jay Hosler's Clan Apis, *a comic book about the life of bees. Simcoe's first adventure, "Racing the Snake," appeared in* DUNGEON *#105.*



Last Stand at Outpost Three

By David Noonan, Illustrated by James Ryman,
Cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

As a special treat to *Dragon* and *Dungeon* readers, this month's issues of both magazines feature in-depth coverage of Dark Sun, one of the most popular and original Dungeons & Dragons campaign settings of all time. From its birth in 1991 to its final official RPG product in October of 1996, Dark Sun adventures and sourcebooks explored the world of Athas, a geologically devastated wasteland dominated by tyrannical godlike sorcerers known as the dragon-kings. From the crumbling ruins of massive city-states to the endless vistas of the Silt Sea, psionic menaces lurked in shadows cast by a dying sun, and everywhere, heroes struggled to make a difference in a hostile realm. Athas was a world of cannibal halflings, a place where the insectoid thri-kreen fought alongside bare-chested swordsmen in massive arenas. Most of all, it was a world of thrilling adventure.

Today, eight years after its cancellation, Dark Sun remains the preferred campaign setting of thousands of Dungeons & Dragons players. A dedicated community of devotees have flocked to the setting's official fan website, athas.org. The site features extensive fan-produced files detailing all manner of information about the setting, from write-ups of important locales to treatises on the unusual fruit of Athas.

But fans aren't the only ones who appreciate Dark Sun. Within months of the completion of Dungeons & Dragons third edition, Wizards of the Coast game designer David Noonan started working on a conversion of the setting to the new rules set. The recent release of the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, from Wizards of the Coast, gave us the perfect opportunity to let Dave share his vision of Dark Sun with the world. *Dragon* #319, currently available at newsstands, game stores, or direct from the source at paizo.com, contains the "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*," a feature that provides everything a player needs to know to create a unique denizen of the world of Athas. This issue of *Dungeon* caters to the other side of the table with the "*Dark Sun DM's Guide*" (see page 60). Skip forward to the "DM's Guide" for an extensive overview of the world of Athas or jump right into the action with "Last Stand at Outpost Three," a perfect introduction to the Dark Sun campaign setting.—*Erik Mona*

"Last Stand at Outpost Three" starts a new Dark Sun campaign with a bang—the PCs meet in a trading outpost under siege by marauding elves. As the siege wears on, the trapped denizens of Outpost Three realize that something is driving the elves to attack heedless of their casualties. The PCs can figure out who's behind the elf attacks and either save the outpost or lead its evacuation.

Regardless of the choices they make, the players get a chance to try out the abilities of their new PCs, and they have a built-in reason to adventure together in the future—they'll all be survivors of the Last Stand at Outpost Three.

While "Last Stand at Outpost Three" is designed for Dark Sun characters, it's pretty easy to adapt the adventure to other campaign settings. Most of the foes work as unusual variants of familiar D&D races and monsters. The Swiftwing tribe could just be a rare subrace of elves touched by strange magic, and the crodlus could be an uncommon breed of dinosaur. Rename the Athasian zombie template to something else (such as "dread zombie"), and you've got an adventure suitable for any desert setting.

"Last Stand at Outpost Three" was also designed to provide NPCs that will be generally useful in an ongoing Dark Sun campaign. Elf bandits, thri-kreen hunters, and psionic healers are staple NPCs in many Dark Sun games. The adventure also gives you room to improvise as a DM. You have a great degree of control over the adventure's pacing, and there are numerous places where you can insert adventure seeds that can blossom as your campaign continues beyond "Last Stand at Outpost Three."

Adventure Preparation

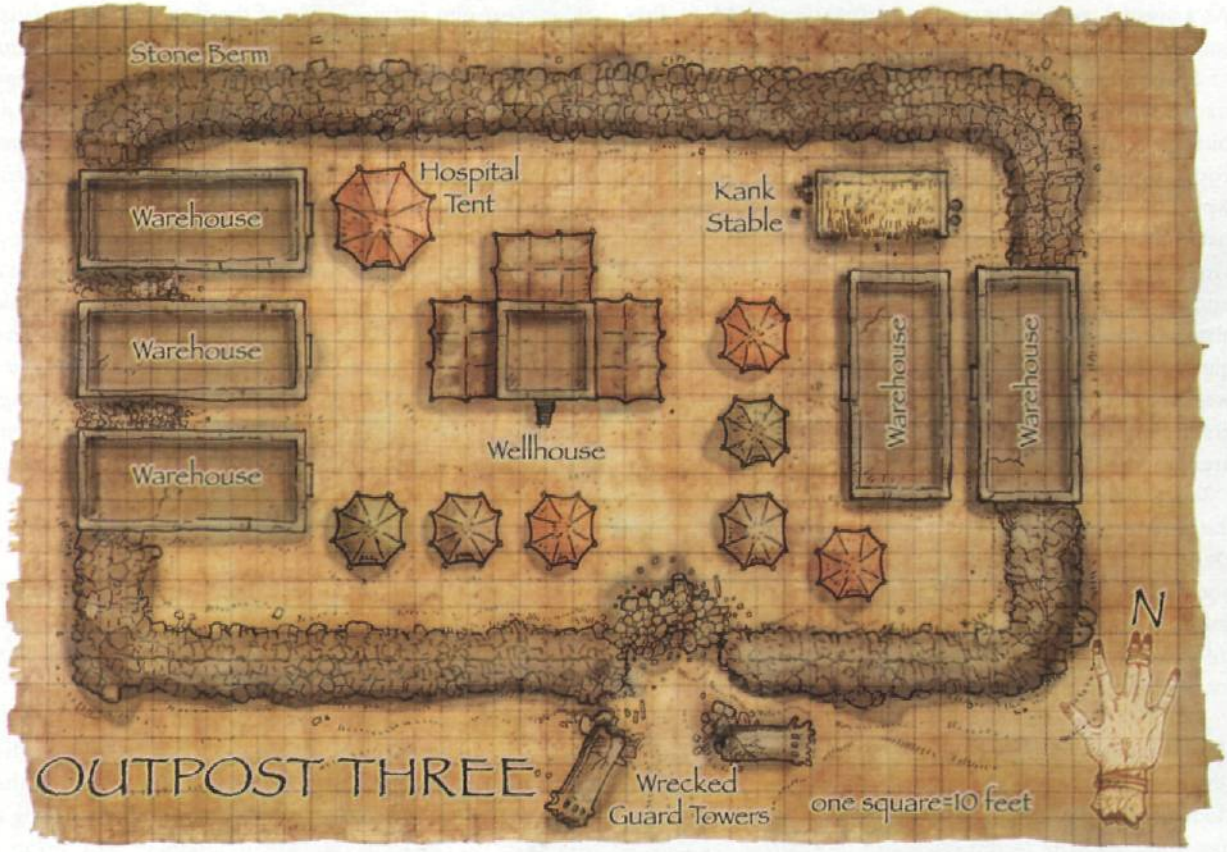
Running "Last Stand at Outpost Three" requires the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, plus the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* and the "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*" in *Dragon* #319.

Before you run the first session of "Last Stand at Outpost Three," familiarize yourself with the psionics rules in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*. Pay particular attention to the low-level powers and the rules for attaining and expending a psionic focus. The focus rules are important to many psionic feats possessed by NPCs in this adventure, and the PCs in your game might have these feats too.

In subsequent sessions, it's important to have a basic familiarity with the capabilities of the major NPCs, especially Laalarash, Gorgoreth, and Haalak. The PCs have a great degree of freedom in this adventure. They can defend the walls of the outpost to the last man. They can try to negotiate with the elves, with the leaders in the outpost, and eventually with Karadao himself. They can wash their hands of the entire affair and begin the trek back to civilization. The better you understand the motivations and abilities of the major NPCs, the more prepared you'll be when the PCs start getting clever.

If you're using this adventure as the start to your Dark Sun campaign, tell the players to build whatever character they like (subject to the rules in *Dragon* #319's "*Dark Sun Player's Handbook*"). Then imagine a reason why their new character would be at Outpost Three, a caravan stop in the stony barrens southwest of Urik (see p. 65).

Because Outpost Three has the only known water source for many miles, creatures of all races, castes, and classes can be found here. PCs might be hunters who've come to sell hides, caravan guards, elemental clerics preaching to the denizens of the outpost, or simply travelers on their way to or from Urik or Tyr. If the PCs want to establish how they know each other, so much the better. But the very first encounter is explicitly designed to turn strangers into comrades-in-arms.



Adventure Background

Centuries ago, a powerful cabal of psions known as The Order researched the connection between necromantic power and psionic energy. One of the fruits of their research were the *rods of the dead mind*, powerful psionic items that converted psionic energy into negative energy. With a *rod of the dead mind*, a psion can rebuke and control undead much like a cleric can.

The Order only created eight of the *rods*. They planned to create more, but about three centuries ago most of The Order's leaders were killed when a plot to seize control of all Athas's psionic energy went awry. Fleeing underlings of the Order absconded with the *rods*, which were kept in one of their strongholds in the Ringing Mountains. Since then, they've passed through many hands. At least three are believed to be in Hamanu's treasure vaults in Destiny's Kingdom.

Karadao is the descendant of one of those minions who claimed a *rod of the dead mind* when The Order disintegrated. This *rod* remained in his family for generations, but because none of them were psions, they remained ignorant of its power.

Not so for Karadao. An accomplished psion, Karadao figured out how to use the *rod of the dead mind*, and his research uncovered a further secret. If a psion possesses more than one *rod of the dead mind*, the powers of the *rod* are multiplied, not just added together. Karadao isn't sure how powerful the multiplier is, but he's desperate to find out.

For years, Karadao researched the *rods of the dead mind*. When mundane research failed, Karadao resorted to magic. Six months ago, he paid a princely sum to an elemental cleric of water for a *commune* spell. Based on what the cleric told him, Karadao knows now that a second *rod of the dead mind* lies at the bottom of the well at Outpost Three.

Karadao visited Outpost Three disguised as a traveler, but he learned that only members of the Klethira merchant house can get into the well-house itself—and in any case, it's the best-guarded building in the outpost. Disappointed, Karadao retreated to the Red Tower, an abandoned fortress built by The Order, to plot his next move.

He didn't have to wait long. The Swiftwing elf tribe soon came to investigate the Red Tower's new inhabitant, and Karadao promptly *dominated* their leader, Haalak. Karadao forced Haalak to start giving his tribe redleaf, an addictive smoking-weed that gives users a sense of indestructibility and renders them more suggestible. Karadao repeated this process with two other elf tribes, the Silverseekers and the Nightcloaks, and now he has a small army at his command. Karadao need only visit each elf chief every few days and provide more redleaf from the stash in his tower, and the elves will do as he bids.

Karadao's elves have now surrounded Outpost Three, trapping a caravan inside. They attack every night shortly after

sunset, slipping back into the stony barrens when it grows too dark to fight. Sometimes they attack again before dawn.

The outpost chief, Gorgoreth, and the caravan master, Laalarash, have mustered every able-bodied creature to man the walls of the outpost and repel the elves who seem determined to seize Outpost Three regardless of the casualties they take in the process.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins at sunset on the third day of the siege, when Laalarash assigns part of the northeast wall to a mix of otherwise unaffiliated defenders—the PCs, in other words. They repel an elven assault, then a second one later that night. The following day, they might have a prisoner to interrogate, and they'll see evidence of a rift between Laalarash and Gorgoreth.

The following night, a duststorm engulfs Outpost Three, temporarily driving off the elves. Yet there is no relief for the Outpost, for Karadao sends Athasian zombies against them that night.

As the situation grows more desperate, the PCs strike out from Outpost Three (either of their own volition or as part of Gorgoreth's plot).

Chapter One: Under Siege

The elves have been making hit-and-run attacks on Outpost Three for two days, and the outpost's defenders are nervous, exhausted, and in many cases wounded.

The battles throughout the night are a chance for the players to get used to the abilities of their new PCs and practice teamwork. Accordingly, you have control over the pacing of the first four encounters. If the PCs are doing well, start the next encounter just as the PCs are finishing off the previous encounter. If the PCs are low on hit points, give them a few rounds to heal before starting the next encounter. If the PCs' spells and powers are badly depleted, save the rest of the encounters in Chapter One for a pre-dawn attack and give the PCs time to rest and recover.

As you run the first four encounters, keep close track of elves who reach negative hit points, tracking whether they stabilize or eventually succumb to their wounds. When the battle's over, it's possible the PCs take an unconscious but living elf captive for interrogation.

Elves on the Wire (EL 4)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Auras: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorpha*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Hide (sniping and creating a diversion to Hide), *Player's Handbook* 76.

> For the last two nights, you've been trapped at Outpost Three, a small trading post and oasis northwest of the city-state of Urik. Bands of marauding elves have attacked the base every night, and their archers have sniped at anyone visible during the heat of the day. At sunset, you share an evening meal in the hospitality tent with many of the outpost's defenders. You see dozens of weary faces, and many bandaged bodies from the previous night's fighting.
>
> You're wiping out your bowls when you hear the cry from the well-house that provides the best vantage point in the outpost: "Elves! Archers to the north! And the east! They're on all sides!"
>
> Laalarash, a human who led a House Klethira caravan into the outpost three days ago, stands and starts barking out orders: "All able-bodied to the wall! Be brave! Defend the house with honor! Gorgoreth, make wall assignments—I'll command from inside the well-house."
>
> Gorgoreth, a human who serves as the outpost's station chief, points at you: "Take the northeast corner of the berm. Defend it as best you can. Fall back if you hear the well-house bell."

You should adjust the text above to account for the PCs in your group. Depending on the PCs' backgrounds, they probably know either Laalarash or Gorgoreth, though probably not well.

Creatures: Let the PCs station themselves anywhere they like below the crest of the berm (see the Northeast Corner map). As soon as the elves (with their +8 Spot bonus) notice someone over the crest of the berm, roll initiative and start the fight. The elves attack in waves. The first wave consists of two elf rogues.

Swiftwing Rogue, Elf Rog2 (2): CR 2; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d6+2; hp 9 each; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/18–20, masterwork bronze scimitar) or +6 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); SA psionics, sneak attack +1d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, low-light vision, trapfinding; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +1, Hide +9, Intimidate +1, Jump +16, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +8, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Tumble +11.

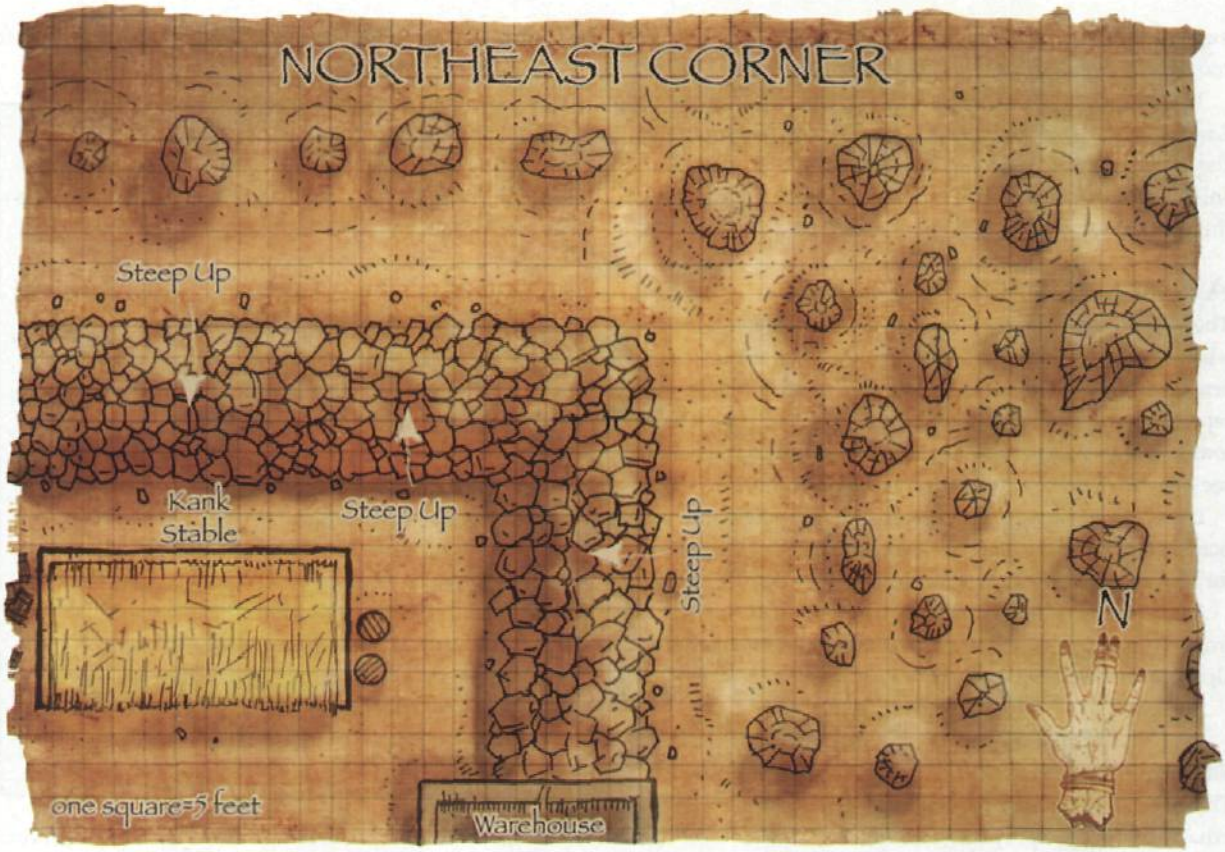
Feats: Endurance[B], Speed of Thought.

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: Masterwork bronze scimitar, masterwork longbow, 10 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, *tattoo of concealing amorpha*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, 5 cp.

Tactics: The two elves prefer to take pot shots with their longbows from behind the rocks. They'll hide (+9 Hide



bonus) and sneak attack the first defenders they see over the stone berm. After the first round, the rogues can use their Bluff bonus of +4 (opposed by Sense Motive) to create enough of a diversion to hide again behind the rocks.

Once the elves start to face opposition, they'll take time to use their *tattoos of animal affinity* (bringing their scimitar attack bonus to +4 and damage to 1d6+2) and *tattoos of concealing amorpha* (20% miss chance). They won't both activate their tattoos at the same time. One elf continues the attack while other uses tattoos, then the first elf uses tattoos while the other attacks.

If the PCs come out to get the Swiftwings, the elves use their speed of 50 feet and Tumble of +11 to get into as many flanking situations as possible.

The rogues' Armor Class falls to 17 if they used their longbows in the previous round, because they have bucklers.

Swiftwing rogues retrieve and drink a *potion of cure light wounds* whenever they're reduced below 5 hp, withdrawing from melee if necessary to avoid an attack of opportunity.

Development: The first challenge for the PCs is relatively straightforward: two elf snipers. Just as they're finishing off the rogues in this encounter, introduce the elves from the Second Wave encounter. Depending on how closely that encounter follows this one, you may or may not want to reroll initiative.

Second Wave (EL 4)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Auras: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorpha*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Bluff (feinting in combat), *Player's Handbook* 68.

The elf attack is disorganized; they're arriving at Outpost Three in small groups. Now another pair of elf rogues from the Swiftwing tribe arrives to continue the assault.

Creatures: If the characters took out the first two elves with little difficulty, just introduce the new foes, rolling initiative for them at the top of a combat round. If the PCs are wounded or spread out, give them a few rounds to regroup before these emerge from the stone field.

Swiftwing Rogues (2): hp 8, 9; See Elves on the Wire, page 35.

Tactics: As described in the Elves on the Wire encounter above, but these rogues are more likely to have melee targets on the outside on the berm. After using their tattoos, the rogues try to flank a foe in melee and cut him down with their scimitars.

If the rogues can't get into a flanking situation, they can try to deny a foe his Dexterity bonus and thus set up a sneak attack

the following round. Their Bluff check of +4 is opposed by the PCs' Sense Motive check result + base attack bonus.

Development: Depending on the PCs' situation, either allow a few rounds to elapse before continuing to the Crodlu Assault encounter below, or introduce the NPCs from the next encounter just as the PCs are finishing off the elf rogues.

Crodlu Assault (EL 6)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elf makes fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Auras: Faint psionic (+1 *studded leather*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), faint psionic (*tattoo of dimension swap*, DC 17, psychoportation).

Important Rules: Handle Animal (list of commands), *Player's Handbook* 74.

Creatures: The next wave of Swiftwings attack the northeast corner of Outpost Three. This group consists of a ranger with a trained crodlu.

Swiftwing Crodlu-Tamer, Elf Rgr3/Ftr1; CR 4; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d8 + 1d10; hp 19; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/×3, masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+2/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) and +8 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork iron short sword) or +9 ranged (1d8+2/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA favored enemy (human) +2, psionics, two weapon combat style; SQ low-light vision, elf traits, wild empathy +4; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Handle Animal +6, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +7.

Feats: Endurance[B], Psionic Weapon, Track[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: +1 *studded leather*, 2 masterwork iron short swords, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str), 20 iron arrows, *tattoo of dimension swap*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, 25 cp.

Crodlu: hp 34; *Dungeon* #110 87.

Tactics: The crodlu-tamer has a *tattoo of animal affinity*, which he uses before combat if possible to improve his Dexterity by +4. This improves both melee and ranged attacks by +2 (because he has the Weapon Finesse feat) and improves his Hide and Move Silently skills and Reflex saves by +2.

The crodlu-tamer is the only elf who can control the crodlus. It takes a move action and a DC 10 Handle Animal check to give a crodlu the Attack, Stay, or Guard commands. If the check fails, the crodlu keeps doing whatever it was doing last round.

The crodlu-tamer also has a *tattoo of dimension swap*, which he uses as a surprise tactic to switch places on the battlefield with the crodlu.

If the crodlu is dead, the crodlu-tamer flees once reduced to less than 10 hp.

The crodlu charges into combat as soon as it can, because it can charge and still make a full attack (due to its pounce ability). It makes as many melee attacks as it possibly can. Unless ordered to stay or keep attacking by the crodlu-tamer, the crodlu flees when it falls below 10 hit points—and with a 250 ft. run, it gets far away quickly.

If the crodlu's handler dies, it attacks any nonelf it can find. If it gets line of sight to the kank stables, it ignores other foes and starts slaughtering kanks.

Development: This is much more serious threat than the elf rogues the PCs have been facing up until this point. If the PCs are doing poorly, introduce one or two caravan guards or Haalak the fire-cleric (described on page 39). If the crodlu gets into the kank stable, Gorgoreth redirects troops from elsewhere to bolster the defense of the northeast corner.

After this encounter, the PCs may need to spend a few rounds healing magically or psionically. Once they've done so, start the Final Push encounter.

Final Push (EL 5)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Elven whoops and war cries (automatic).

Reaction: To casualties—elves make fighting withdrawal into the stone field.

Aura: Faint psionic (*tattoo of concealing amorpha*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), 2 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Bluff (feinting in combat), *Player's Handbook* 68.

Creatures: This is the last group of elves to attack the northeast corner of the outpost—although the PCs don't know that.

Swiftwing Rogues (3): hp 11, 9, 8; See Elves on the Wire, page 35.

Tactics: These elf rogues take up positions in the rocks and attack with ranged or melee weapons, depending on the situation. If the crodlu and the crodlu-tamer are still fighting, they run for the berm while keeping their distance from the crodlu. They hope to either draw some of the PCs away from the crodlu fight or get inside the wall themselves.

Development: When these elves fall or flee, the sunset attack is over. PCs with line of sight to the other stone berms can see outpost defenders at the ready, but no fighting going on elsewhere. The survivors soon start to tend to the wounded, carrying those most in dire need of aid to the well-house.

If the PCs chase the elves into the stone field or try to track them, go to the Rearguard encounter below. Otherwise Gorgoreth visits the northeast wall in about 10 minutes and tells the PCs they can stand down, saying, "None of you are on night watch, so you can get some rest."

Rearguard (EL 6)

Light: Twilight (50 ft. normal illumination and 50 ft. shadowy illumination; double for creatures with low-light vision).

Sound: Faint shouts from outpost defenders (automatic).

Reaction: None.

Aura: Faint psionic (*+1 composite longbow*, DC 17, metacreativity), Faint psionic (*+1 studded leather*, DC 17, metacreativity), faint psionic (*tattoo of animal affinity*, DC 17, psychometabolism), faint magic (*potion of invisibility*, DC 17, illusion), 4 faint magic (*potion of cure light wounds*, DC 16, conjuration).

Important Rules: Track, *Player's Handbook* 101; Invisibility, *Dungeon Master's Guide* 295; Poison, *Dungeon Master's Guide* 296.

Once the elves are repulsed by the defenders at Outpost Three, they flee into the surrounding desert. PCs who chase them run into one of the Swiftwing tribe's best raiders. This elf tries to drive the PCs back to the outpost—or at least occupy them long enough for the others to escape.

Unless the PCs can somehow maintain line of sight to the fleeing elves, they'll have to follow tracks to trace the elves' path through the stone field. A DC 17 Survival check is required to track the elves.

If the PCs penetrate more than a few hundred feet into the stone field, they'll run into one of the Swiftwing tribe's subchiefs guarding the elves' path of retreat.

Swiftwing Boss, Elf Rgr2/Rog4: CR 6; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 2d8+4d6+6; hp 29; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork iron falchion) or +11 ranged (1d8+2, *+1 composite longbow*); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork falchion) or +9/+9 ranged (1d8+2, *+1 composite longbow*); SA psionics, favored enemy (human) +2, sneak attack +2d6; SQ elf traits, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +3; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +7, Handle Animal +4, Hide +14, Jump +16, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Spot +10, Survival +6, Tumble +15.

Feats: Endurance[B], Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot[B], Track[B], Weapon Focus (longbow).

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: *+1 composite longbow (+1 Str)*, masterwork iron falchion, *+1 studded leather*, *tattoo of animal affinity*, *potion of invisibility*, 20 iron arrows, 4 *potions of cure light wounds*, 1 dose large scorpion venom.

Tactics: The elf's first standard action in combat is to activate his *tattoo of animal affinity*, increasing his Strength to 17. This gives him a +9 melee attack with his falchion (2d4+4)

but doesn't increase his +1 *composite longbow* damage since its Strength rating is +1. He then takes a full-round action to retrieve and drink a *potion of invisibility*. Once he's invisible, he sneaks around the PCs, looking for a good sneak attack opportunity. If he uses his bow on a target within 30 feet, he gains an additional +1 on attack and damage due to the Point Blank Shot feat.

The Swiftwing boss can maneuver around the battlefield well with his speed of 40 feet and his +15 Tumble bonus. He's also stocked with healing potions, so he can withdraw for a round or two, quaff some potions, then return to the fray.

If one PC in particular seems dangerous, the Swiftwing boss spends a full-round action to retrieve and apply scorpion venom on an arrow. If he later hits with that arrow, the poison deals 1d6 points of Strength damage (initial and secondary) and has a Fortitude save DC of 18.

Chapter Two: Between Battles

When the PCs aren't on the wall, they can get rest or explore other parts of Outpost Three. If they did well defending the northeast part of the outpost, the other outpost defenders treat them with a degree of deference and the PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on any Diplomacy or Gather Information checks made in the outpost.

If the PCs want to check out the various tents and buildings within the outpost, they can wander around as they like. The inside of the well-house and the western warehouses remain off-limits to anyone who isn't a member of House Klethira (which is everyone but Laalarash and Gorgoreth in the outpost at this time). Gorgoreth used his *psionic lock* power to secure the doors to the western warehouses, and a *forbiddance* (cast last year by an Urikite templar) bars entrance to the interior of the well-house. A rune of warning over the doorway warns casual thieves of the danger of entering; a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 21) allows a character to realize the rune specifically warns about a *forbiddance* spell. Of those present, only Gorgoreth and Laalarash know the password ("Keltivarri"). The spell effect is at caster level 12 and is keyed to the lawful evil alignment.

Creatures: It's not likely the PCs ever fight the outpost guards, but they may come to aid the PCs if they get in over their heads in a fight. Some of these guards are permanently stationed at Outpost Three and some of them came in on Laalarash's caravan.

If the guards are drawn into a fight involving the PCs, they tend to be cautious and seek cover long enough to manifest *offensive precognition*. They then shoot their bows at the nearest foes. Because the guards have Point Blank Shot, they have an extra +1 to attack rolls and deal an extra point of damage against targets within 30 feet.

Guards flee or seek total cover when reduced to 5 hp or less.

Outpost Guards (12): Human Ftr 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+2/18–20, bronze falchion) or +6 ranged (1d8+3/×3, masterwork composite longbow); SA psionics; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +8, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +2.

Feats: Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

Languages: Common.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*offensive precognition*.

Possessions: Bronze falchion, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str), 10 iron arrows, bronze breastplate.

Getting Healing (EL 3 or EL 5; see text)

There are two NPCs present who can heal the wounded—and both Amanya and Haalak are busy doing just that after the latest assault. The PCs have to negotiate with them if they want healing. Haalak the fire-cleric is easier to get healing from, but Amanya the egoist is a better healer.

Creatures: Haalak the fire cleric, an older human male with shaggy white hair, wanders around the outpost at random, muttering to himself a lot. He wears chitin armor and his hands are black, as if he rubbed charcoal on them.

Haalak is an engaging conversationalist, but his tries to turn any discussion toward his favorite topic: burning things. His initial attitude is indifferent, but that's a reflection of how he feels about topics that aren't fire-related. He's friendly enough—just obsessed with fire and more than a little crazy.

Amanya is an older gray-haired human woman who wears an ill-fitting bronze breastplate. She rarely leaves her hospital tent, which is crowded with the wounded and dying.

Amanya lives at the outpost, and she's a good friend to Gorgoreth. She's not happy that Laalarash arrived and pulled rank on Gorgoreth—and she gets angrier each time Laalarash retreats to the well-house during a fight.

Haalak, Human Clr3 (Fire): CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+6; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +3 melee (1d8/×3, masterwork iron spear) or +4 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light repeating crossbow); SA psionics, spells, turn undead; SQ —; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills: Concentration +8, Survival +6.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (light repeating crossbow), Psionic Endowment, Wild Talent.

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (3), *detect poison*; 1st—*burning hands**, *detect evil*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *produce flame**, *summon monster II*.

*Domain Spell; *Domains*: Death (death touch 1/day), Fire (turn or destroy water creatures).

Powers Known (5 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*energy ray*.

Possessions: *+1 chitin armor*, masterwork light repeating crossbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork iron spear, scroll of *lesser restoration*, scroll of *cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *speak with dead*.

Amanya, Human Psi5 (egoist): CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d4+15; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk/Full Atk +1 melee (1d6–1, iron shortspear) or +2 ranged (1d6–1, iron shortspear); SA psionics; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Autohypnosis +11, Concentration +9, Heal +11, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (psionics) +12, Psicraft +12.

Feats: Body Fuel, Mind Over Body, Overchannel, Psionic Body, Talented.

Languages: Common, Aarakocran, Elvish, Ignan, Thri-Kreen.

Powers Known (41 PP; save DC 14 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics, empathy, far hand, inertial armor, missive, thicken skin*; 2nd—*detect hostile intent, empathic transfer, mass missive, psionic identify, psionic tongues*; 3rd—*body adjustment, body purification*.

Possessions: Bronze breastplate, iron shortspear, iron dagger, *dorje of psionic restoration* (9 charges left).

Haalak Tactics: If Haalak is acting as a battlefield healer, he casts *sanctuary* on himself and scurries from ally to ally, casting two *cure light wounds* and two *cure moderate wounds*. He also has *burning hands* and *produce flame* at his disposal, but casting either spell ends his *sanctuary*.

If Haalak is fighting, he casts *summon monster II* from behind cover to summon a cinderbrute (p. 86). Then he casts *entropic shield*, then uses *produce flame* and his *energy ray* psionic power (choosing fire, of course) to attack at range. Once those spells and powers have been used, Haalak fires his crossbow from behind cover, saving *burning hands* for any foes that try to engage him in melee.

Haalak is very aggressive in a fight. He only retreats if PCs convince him to do so (his starting attitude is unfriendly for this purpose).

Amanya Tactics: Amanya can use her *empathic transfer* power to take others' wounds upon herself, healing a wounded ally in this way. Then she uses *body adjustment* to heal herself.

If Amanya runs low on power points, she can use her Body Fuel feat to get additional power points for each point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution damage she takes. She naturally heals 3 points of ability score damage per day (due to her Mind Over Body feat) and she has a *dorje of psionic restoration*, so she's willing to suffer a lot of ability score damage if the need is dire.

If Amanya gets into a fight, she is very cautious, fleeing at the first available opportunity. She knows how important she is to the defense of the outpost.

Haalak Development: The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence Haalak: Characters talk about burning something (+2); PCs help him light something big on fire (+4); Characters let it slip that they think he's crazy (–2); Characters put out a major fire (–4).

If Hostile (Attacked by PCs): Attacks, but retreats when endangered.

If Unfriendly (Check Result 0 or Less): Ignores PCs or threatens them with the power of fire.

If Indifferent (Check Result 1–14): Lights things on fire for them, but that's it.

If Friendly (Check Result 15–29): Puts half his spellcasting at the PCs' disposal.

If Helpful (Check Result 30 or More): Puts spellcasting and scrolls at PCs' disposal.

Amanya Development: Amanya's initial attitude is unfriendly to any PC who hasn't lived at the outpost for at least six months. The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence her: Amanya learns of PCs' prowess (+2); an NPC other than Laalarash vouches for them (+4); Laalarash gets involved (–2); PCs imply that she's "wasting" healing on others (–4).

If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less): Has orderlies "escort" PCs from hospital tent.

If Unfriendly (Check Result 5–14): Brusquely explains the concept of triage, telling the PCs she has more serious cases to deal with.

If Indifferent (Check Result 15–24): Grudgingly spends one-third of her available power points on PCs.

If Friendly (Check Result 25–39): Spends one-half of her available power points on PCs.

If Helpful (Check Result 40 or More): Spends two-thirds of her available power points on PCs.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs successfully negotiate with either Haalak or Amanya for healing, award them experience as if they'd defeated that NPC in combat. Subsequent negotiations for healing don't earn experience.

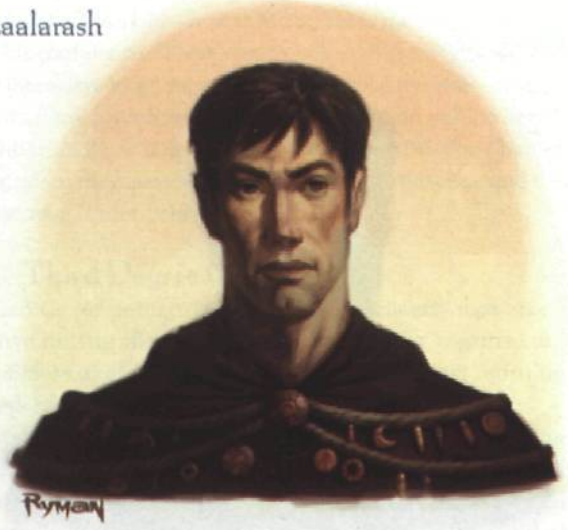
Talking to Laalarash

Laalarash is in way over his head. The master of a caravan bringing tools and "comfort items" (booze and food) to one of Urik's obsidian mines in the Ringing Mountains, he found himself trapped inside Outpost Three when the elves surrounded the place. He's assumed command, but he knows very little about even basic military tactics—his expertise lies in profit margins and negotiating tariff rates with Urik's templars.

Creature: Laalarash is determined to put on a brave face for those under his command, so he often "tours the battlements" (always during the day when attacks are unlikely) and "drills the troops" (always a pointless marching exercise or parade inspection). He watches fights from the relative safety of the well-house tower, too frightened to approach the battle further and too indecisive to issue orders.

But away from an actual battle, Laalarash is less of a pushover. He's absolutely determined to save both the outpost and his caravan, and he brooks no talk of abandoning

Laalarash



Outpost Three or negotiating surrender with the elves. He's eager to "improve morale" among the outpost defenders by talking tactics, and he entertains reasonable suggestions, making them seem like his own ideas if possible.

Laalarash Human Rog4/Rgr3: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d6 + 3d8; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian short sword) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +6/+6/+3 melee (1d6+1/19–20, two masterwork blood obsidian short swords) or +8 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow); SA psionics, favored enemy (elves) +2, sneak attack +2d6, two-weapon combat style; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy +9; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 18.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +8, Profession +8, Ride +12, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +6 (+8 above ground).

Feats: Inquisitor, Dodge, Endurance[B], Psionic Dodge, Track[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (short sword).

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Maenadi.

Powers Known (6 PP; save DC 14 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*; 2nd—*psionic lock*.

Possessions: +2 *studded leather armor, cloak of protection* +1, 2 masterwork blood obsidian short swords, masterwork light crossbow, 10 iron bolts, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*.

Tactics: Laalarash prefers not to fight, using his social skills to talk his way out of a battle. Failing that, he puts as many loyal troops as possible between himself and the enemy, then acts as a sniper, hiding behind cover and using his crossbow to sneak attack nearby enemies. In melee, he fights cautiously, trying to leave himself a path of withdrawal at all times.

Because Laalarash has both the Dodge and Psionic Dodge feats, his Armor Class is two points higher against a single foe he designates—usually the strongest enemy melee fighter he can see.

If Laalarash takes more than 10 points of damage, he drinks one of his *potions of cure moderate wounds*. He saves the *potion of fly* for a getaway if he can't flee on foot.

Development: Laalarash's initial attitude is indifferent—a reflection of the airs he's putting on as commander of the outpost's defense.

The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: Characters use military jargon to get their point across (+2); PCs suggest ideas that make Laalarash seem clever or brave (+4); Characters mention Gorgoreth in a positive way (–2); PCs cast aspersions on Laalarash or the importance of the command structure (–4).

If Hostile (Attacked by PCs): Orders nearby caravan guards to apprehend the PCs, then retreats to safety.

If Unfriendly (Check Result 0 or Less): Orders the PCs to man the walls immediately. A half-hour later, he orders Gorgoreth to check up on the PCs and make sure they're truly loyal.

If Indifferent (Check Result 1–14): Entertains obvious suggestions that directly improve the security of the outpost, such as digging trenches or establishing a reserve of troops to counterattack.

If Friendly (Check Result 15–29): Considers—and possibly even suggests—activities that send a strike team (the PCs, basically) beyond the walls of the outpost for reconnaissance or a commando raid.

If Helpful (Check Result 30 or More): Gives PCs indirect control of the outpost's defenses. Laalarash still issues the orders, but he takes PC advice as long as it's plausible.

Talking to Gorgoreth

Gorgoreth is in the unenviable position of not commanding his own outpost. For three years, Gorgoreth managed Outpost Three, keeping it safe from elf bandits (though never ones as persistent as the current groups), belgoi tribes, and other monsters from the surrounding wasteland. But since Outpost Three's purpose is to support House Klethira's caravans, he's subordinate to Laalarash and was forced to concede command of the outpost to him.

To say that Gorgoreth chafes under Laalarash's diffident command is an understatement. Most of the outpost defenders (caravan guard and outpost guard alike) can tell that Gorgoreth isn't happy. But Gorgoreth has seen ineffective caravan masters before, so he's determined to suffer Laalarash while he quietly does his best to keep Outpost Three safe.

Creature: Gorgoreth has a secret. He's in the pay of House Stel, the dominant merchant house in Urik. Stel's agents pay Gorgoreth to use his *remote viewing* power to periodically report on House Klethira's caravan schedules. When the elves started attacking Outpost Three, Gorgoreth sent word

to both House Klethira headquarters in Urik and his contact with House Stel.

Gorgoreth knows that House Klethira has sent a relief column that'll arrive in three days time. He also suspects that House Stel might be sending aid—although House Stel might just keep Outpost Three for itself if it arrives to find it ill-defended.

The PCs could talk to Gorgoreth for any number of reasons, from the tactical ("What's in the western warehouses?") to the strategic ("What if we abandon the outpost for a few days, then reoccupy it once the elves move on?"). Gorgoreth's specific responses to PC inquiries thus can vary quite a bit; don't be afraid to diverge from the suggested responses given in the Development section.

Gorgoreth Human Psi7 (seer): CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d4+24; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +2 melee (1d6–1, quarterstaff) or +4 ranged touch (3d6, *dorje of crystal shard*); SA psionics; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +12, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Listen +12, Psicraft +13, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Greater Psionic Endowment, Narrow Mind, Psionic Body, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation.

Languages: Common, Elven, Maenadi, Thri-Kreen.

Powers Known (62 PP; save DC 13 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics, force screen, inertial armor, mind thrust, precognition, psionic charm*; 2nd—*clairvoyant sense, detect hostile intent, id insinuation, object reading, psionic lock*; 3rd—*dispel psionics, energy bolt, mental barrier, psionic blast*; 4th—*mindwipe, remote viewing*.

Possessions: *Cognizance crystal* (3), *dorje of crystal shard* (augmented to 3d6; 21 charges remaining), quarterstaff, power stone of *psionic dimension door*, power stone of *wall of ectoplasm*.

Tactics: Moreso than most NPCs, Gorgoreth needs a few rounds to prepare before he enters battle. He relies on his psionic powers for protection, so he manifests *inertial armor* (spending 7 power points to get a +7 armor bonus to AC) and *force screen* (spending 1 power point to get a +4 shield bonus). In a fight, Gorgoreth can also increase his AC by +4 as an immediate action by manifesting the *mental barrier* power (which costs 5 power points). Thus his Armor Class is usually 22 or 26, depending on his *mental barrier*.

Gorgoreth has the Greater Psionic Endowment, Narrow Mind, and Psionic Meditation feats, so he prefers to manifest a power that requires a saving throw, expending his focus to add +2 to the save DC. Then he'll spend a move action to refocus (+16 Concentration check, DC 20). He's also not shy about augmenting his powers—Gorgoreth considers combat something to be ended as quickly as possible.

In rough order of preference, Gorgoreth's powers that require saving throws are: *mindwipe* (two negative levels, Fort negates DC 17, 7 power points), *psionic blast* (stuns for 2 rounds, Will negates DC 16, 7 power points), *energy bolt* (7d6 electricity, Reflex half DC 19, 7 power points), *id insinuation* (3 targets confused, Will negates DC 17, 7 power points), *mind thrust* (7d10 damage, Will negates DC 17, 7 power points), and *psionic charm* (extra creature types, Will negates DC 16, 5 power points). Increase all saving throw DCs by +2 if Gorgoreth expends his focus.

Gorgoreth

If Gorgoreth isn't directly threatened (he's manning the walls with others against an elf attack, for example), he manifests powers to increase his Armor Class, then fires his *dorje of crystal shard* every round from behind cover.

Gorgoreth retrieves and activates his power stone of *psionic dimension door* to get away if he falls below 15 hit points.

Development: Gorgoreth's initial attitude is unfriendly, which represents his brusque nature and the fact that he has a lot competing for his attention more than any actual malice toward the PCs. The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: the PCs tell Gorgoreth that they're frustrated with Laalarash (+2); he witnesses the PCs handily defeating elves (+4); the PCs suggest mutiny against Laalarash (–2); PCs advocate abandoning the outpost (–4).

If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less): Gorgoreth orders the PCs to guard the walls, and uses psionics to force them from his presence if necessary. "Beat it, or I'll make your brains leak out your ears."

If Unfriendly (Check Result 5–14): Tells PCs to go deal with Laalarash. "He's in charge here, not me."

If Indifferent (Check Result 15–24): Answers questions as long as the PCs have a satisfactory explanation for why they want to know. "The picks and shovels are locked up in the northwest warehouse; why do you ask?"

If Friendly (Check Result 25–39): Takes the PCs into his confidence—to a degree. "If we could just set up a parley with the elves, we might be able to work something out. The raiders themselves aren't willing to talk, but if we could get to the chiefs somehow..."

If Helpful (Check Result 40 or More): Takes the PCs completely into his confidence. "There's help on the way from Urik, but it'll take three days to get here. If we can just bog the elves down in negotiations for a few days, the relief column will be here."

The friendly or helpful results set up the PCs for Chapter Four, when they leave Outpost Three to find the elves and the mysterious leader behind them.

The Third Degree (EL 2)

If the PCs (or perhaps other outpost defenders) took an elf captive during the sunset raid, the prisoner regains consciousness at about 3 bells after sunrise the next morning unless he receives magical healing before then.

Creature: Alie-Aka is an elf rogue from the Swiftwing tribe. He's been stripped of everything but a loincloth and sandals. Scars and fresher wounds crisscross his torso and especially his back. While conscious, he's probably still at negative hit points; use –5 if NPC outpost defenders took him captive.

Alie-Aka (2): hp 9; other stats as for the Swiftwing rogues in Elves on the Wire, page 35.

Development: Alie-Aka's initial attitude is hostile. At first he'll only curse in Elven at his captors, but it's possible for skilled interrogators to draw him out with either Diplomacy or Intimidate.

The following circumstance modifiers apply to the PCs' attempts to influence him: PCs use a good cop/bad cop technique, with a Diplomacy check assisting an Intimidate attempt or vice versa (+2); PCs threaten Alie-Aka with imprisonment (+4); PCs speak to him in Elven (+4); PCs threaten him with pain or death (–2); PCs knock him out again (–4 after he regains consciousness.)

If Hostile (Check Result 19 or Less): Insults but says nothing further. Accidentally gives his name.

If Unfriendly (Check Result 20–24): Reveals Swiftwing strength in general terms, and anything else that'll scare his captors. Tries Bluff to set himself up as a guide through Swiftwing lands (he actually plans to lead the PCs into an ambush).

If Indifferent (Check Result 25–34): Brags about how the Swiftwings are still "strong in numbers and pure of spirit." Explains that if they set him free, he'll sketch them a map that avoids the Swiftwing cordon. The route leads straight past a Swiftwing observation post, which Alie-Aka won't mark on the map, but the map is otherwise reasonably accurate.

If Friendly (Check Result 35–49): Describes Swiftwing forces in detail, but can't explain the sustained siege. Draws an area map that's accurate, including the location of Swiftwing observation posts and the general location of the other two elf tribes.

If Helpful (Check Result 50 or More): Explains that a mysterious cloaked figure named Karadao visits the chieftain every week or so. Alie-Aka has seen Karadao only once, and noticed that there was a bulky—maybe obese—figure under those black robes.

It's unlikely that the PCs' Intimidate or Diplomacy checks improve Alie-Aka's attitude to friendly or helpful, but *psionic charm* and *charm person* immediately improve Alie-Aka's attitude to friendly.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs are able to improve Alie-Aka's attitude at least to indifferent, they earn experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

A Gathering Storm

One bell before sunset on the second day, read or paraphrase the following.

> Following the gaze and pointed fingers of the guards on the stone berm, you look to the east. The horizon is obscured by a massive gray-black cloud that stretches high into the sky, roiling as if it were a thing alive.

A successful Survival check (DC 15) is sufficient to confirm the rumor sweeping across Outpost Three: a massive duststorm is bearing down on the outpost and will arrive shortly after nightfall.

After about 15 minutes of game time have passed, read or paraphrase the following.

> Laalarash has assembled all the able-bodied outpost defenders near the well-house. "My weather observations indicate that a duststorm is on its way," he says. "A big one."
>
> "At least we won't have to worry about the elves tonight—they're probably scurrying into whatever holes and crevices they can find. Disassemble all the tents and anything that won't withstand a storm, then report to Gorgoreth, who will assign you to one of the warehouses. You'll stay there until the dust storm has passed."

The PCs are expected to help dismantle the tents, but don't dwell on this overlong. Once the PCs are ready, Gorgoreth assigns them to the center western warehouse. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Gorgoreth dismisses the *psionic lock* and lets you inside, then closes the door behind you. "It should be obvious when the duststorm has passed. Until then, stay inside. Oh, and Laalarash says to stay out of the crates—it's mostly dried food and rootwine for the obsidian mines. That's what Laalarash says."

If the PCs previously talked to Gorgoreth and know about the relief column heading toward Outpost Three, Gorgoreth adds that he's worried. "If they can't reach shelter, the storm'll wipe them out," he says grimly.

Not long after Gorgoreth shuts the warehouse door, the PCs hear the wind pick up, eventually reaching a dull roar

that makes sleep somewhat difficult. The PCs can pilfer the trade goods in the warehouse if they like—there's no real consequences if they do.

Chapter Three: Night of the Duststorm

While neither elves nor PCs can function long in the midst of a duststorm, Karadao has other minions at his disposal. During the night, he sends Athasian zombies (a template described in the Appendix) against the PCs.

This sets up another cascade of linked battles using a common map. As in Chapter One, use your own sense of pacing to determine how quickly one encounter follows another. The first encounter occurs about three bells after sunset.

Zombies at the Door (EL 7)

Light: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).
Sound: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a –4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).
Reaction: None.
Aura: Faint evil (zombie rogues).
Important Rules: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook* 159; Greater duststorm, *Dungeon Master's Guide* 94.

> You're finally getting used to the roar of the duststorm outside and the hiss of fine sand seeping into the warehouse through cracks in the walls and ceiling.
>
> With a boom and a crack, the top half of the warehouse door staves in. Through the dust you can dimly see elves bearing a makeshift battering ram.

Have the PCs make Spot checks immediately, and tell anyone who gets a DC 10 or better that these elves are pale white and glassy-eyed.

Then have the players roll initiative as the elf zombies start to clamber into the warehouse.

Creatures: Because they don't breathe and are immune to nonlethal damage, zombies can survive in a duststorm with little difficulty. They attack several of the warehouses, including the one the PCs occupy.

Zombie Swiftwing Rogue, Athasian Zombie Elf Rog2 (4): CR 3; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, slam) or +6 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, slam) and –1 melee (1d4+1 plus disease, bite) or +6 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); SA disease, psionics, sneak attack +1d6; SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead qualities; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 19, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Zombie Plague (Su): Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 8. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +2, Diplomacy –1, Hide +9, Intimidate –1, Jump +18, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +11.

Feats: Endurance[B], Speed of Thought.

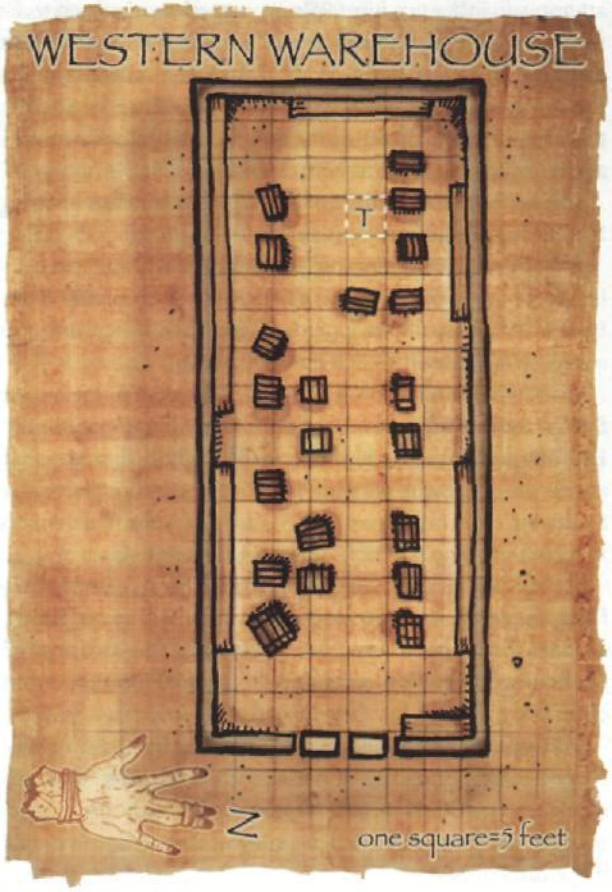
Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: Masterwork longbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler.

Tactics: Players used to standard D&D zombies are in for a surprise—these zombies are fast, smart, and skilled. Play up their speed, and make sure you check for zombie plague infection with each successful bite. The zombie rogues' Armor Class goes down to 19 if they used their bows in the previous round, because they use bucklers. Don't forget that they have damage reduction of 5/slashing and are immune to mind-affecting spells and powers.

The PCs have one key advantage in this fight: the zombies must climb through the hole in the warehouse door to get inside. The zombie rogues have a Climb bonus of +3 and getting through the gap in the door is a DC 0 check, but the zombies use accelerated climbing (taking a –5 penalty on the roll), so there's a chance they'll fail and make no progress. If a zombie succeeds on the climb check, it takes 10 feet of movement to get through the door. While



entering, the zombies can't use their bucklers and don't get their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, so they're AC 15 until they get inside and spend a move action to ready their bucklers again.

Development: These zombies are tough to fight for PCs without slashing weapons. If few or no PCs have slashing weapons, put a box of bronze scimitars (captured from the elves) somewhere in the warehouse.

When this encounter is wrapping up, move to the Zombie on the Roof encounter below unless the PCs need time to heal. Because the next encounter starts with two rounds of a thudding sound from outside the warehouse, it is a particularly good encounter to begin while the PCs are still occupied with this encounter.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Because the PCs have a significant terrain advantage in this fight, award 10% less experience than you otherwise would. It's a high-EL encounter relative to the PCs' level, so it'll still be a big experience point award.

Zombie on the Roof (EL 5)

Light: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).
Sound: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a –4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).
Reaction: None.
Aura: Moderate evil (zombie crodlu-tamer).
Important Rules: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook* 159; *Greater duststorm*, *Dungeon Master's Guide* 94.

> You hear a thud every second or so, coming from the trap door in the roof. With each thud, the trap door seems to shiver.

Creature: A zombie atop the warehouse jumps up and down on the trap door, trying to cave it in. The zombie crashes through the trap door into the warehouse after two rounds of jumping. The ten-foot drop inflicts 1d6 points of damage to the zombie unless it makes a Jump check (DC 15) to reduce the effective height of the fall to zero feet.

Zombie Swiftwing Crodlu-Tamer, Athasian Zombie Elf Rgr3/Ftr1; CR 5; Medium undead; HD 4d12; hp 26; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam) or +8 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, slam) and +1 melee (1d4+2 plus disease, bite) or +8 ranged (1d8/×3, masterwork longbow); SA disease, favored enemy (human) +2, psionics, two weapon combat style; SQ damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 20, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4.

Zombie Plague (Su): Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 9. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Skills: Handle Animal +4, Hide +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Search +2, Spot +8, Survival +6.

Feats: Endurance[B], Psionic Weapon, Track[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Zombie Elf

Languages: Common, Elven.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*conceal thoughts*.

Possessions: Masterwork longbow, 5 iron arrows, masterwork studded leather.

Tactics: This zombie has both a potent ranged attack and a good set of melee attacks. It hangs back and shoots arrows at PCs if it can, then moves into melee and makes as many full attacks as possible. It has damage reduction of 5/slashing, and it's smart enough to use its arrows on PCs with slashing weapons, then stand toe-to-toe with a foe wielding a bludgeoning or piercing weapon.

Development: This encounter leads right into the Zombies Everywhere encounter below, subject to your sense of pacing.

Zombies Everywhere (EL 6)

Light: Torches inside warehouse (normal illumination).
Sound: Roaring duststorm outside (automatic; imposes a –4 penalty on Listen checks to hear anything else).
Reaction: None.
Aura: Faint evil (zombie rogues).
Important Rules: Turn or Rebuke Undead, *Player's Handbook*, p. 159; Greater duststorm, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, p. 94.

> After a moment of quiet, another zombie appears at the door. You also hear footsteps on the roof.

This encounter is simple, but dangerous. Two more zombies (one rogue and one crodlu-tamer) attack the warehouse. One drops through the open trap door and another comes through the hole in the front door.

Zombie Swiftwing Rogue: hp 12; see Zombies at the Door, above.

Zombie Crodlu-Tamer: hp 24; see Zombie on the Roof, above.

Development: If the PCs are too worn out for this encounter, it's OK to skip it.

Aftermath

Once the zombies have been defeated, the PCs can patch up the trap door and warehouse door using packing material from the warehouse. PCs can try to check on the the other warehouses, but surviving exposure to the greater duststorm for more than a few rounds is difficult.

The duststorm abates at about two bells after sunrise. When the PCs emerge from the warehouse, they quickly learn that most of the other warehouses were breached and many of the outpost defenders slain. The carnage of the zombie attack increases the pressure on Laalarash and/or Gorgoreth to somehow end the siege. Their plans (attack the elves or parley with them, respectively) will definitely involve the PCs, sending them beyond the outpost.

Chapter Four: Beyond Outpost Three

At this point, "Last Stand at Outpost Three" becomes less of an adventure and more of a jumping-off point for your DARK SUN campaign. The PCs almost certainly leave the outpost on a journey of some sort, but its purpose and destination is up to you and the players.

Some possible journeys include:

- Gorgoreth sends the PCs to negotiate with the elves. The PCs must brave the rigors of the stony barrens, survive the elves guarding the Swiftwing camp, then negotiate with the elf chief. If they succeed at a DC 15 Sense Motive check or use *detect psionics*, they'll be able to tell that the chief of the Swiftwing tribe has been *dominated*.
- Laalarash sends the PCs on a reconnaissance mission. As above, but the players aren't trying to talk with the elves but spy on their movements and hopefully get warning of an attack. The adventure turns into a cat-and-mouse game between the PCs and the elves, played out across the stony landscape.
- Laalarash sends the PCs on a reprisal raid. As above, but the PCs aren't trying to remain hidden. They're trying to find and slay as many elves as they can.
- Laalarash or Gorgoreth sends the PCs to find the relief column. The duststorm didn't destroy it completely, but it did leave the convoy exhausted and lost. The PCs must find the rescue convoy and then guide it back to Outpost Three.
- Gorgoreth sends the PCs to connect with House Stel mercenaries nearby. A group of maenad mercenaries in the pay of House Stel was also on its way to Outpost Three when the duststorm struck. Though their numbers are depleted, they could be useful allies in the defense of the outpost—or they could try to seize Outpost Three for House Stel.
- The PCs strike out on their own to deal with the elves—and whoever's behind them. If they got Alie-Aka to talk, it's possible they know of Karadao. If they can free the Swiftwing chief from *domination* or successfully interrogate him,

they'll learn the location of the mysterious Red Tower and Karadao. If the PCs meet zombies during one of their other missions, they could track the undead back to the Red Tower.

- The PCs convince Laalarash and Gorgoreth to abandon Outpost Three. Miles of hostile wilderness separate a ragtag convoy from civilization. The PCs must take a lead role in finding the way back—and defending the survivors of Outpost Three en route.
- The PCs bug out. It's certainly conceivable that the players grow weary of the squabbling between Laalarash and Gorgoreth and decide that the fate of Outpost Three isn't important to them. They'll have to get out of the outpost alive (Laalarash is keen to shoot deserters), then make their way back to civilization, probably to either Urik or Tyr.

Let both the play style of your group and your plans for an ongoing DARK SUN campaign guide you at this point. If your players enjoy intrigue and negotiation, have them try to negotiate with the elves. If they are spoiling for another fight, send them out elf-hunting. If you want to use Karadao as a master villain in your DARK SUN game, point the PCs toward the Red Tower.

The PCs have a destination in mind, whether it's the elf camp, the Red Tower, the city-state of Urik, or a relief caravan lost in the wilderness. This adventure ends—and the next one begins—when they reach that destination. But first, they must survive the wilds of Athas.

One of the greatest dangers that faces desert travelers in the world of DARK SUN is the weather. There's little chance of precipitation in the desert, but the overall temperature can impact how much ground can be covered in a day of travel.

TABLELANDS WEATHER

d%	Weather
01–10	Cooler, calm. High of 55°F + (3d4 × 5).
11–70	Hot, calm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5).
81–85	Hot, breezy. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). Moderate winds.
86–90	Hot, windy. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5). Strong winds.
91–97	Duststorm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5).
98	Greater duststorm. High of 75°F + (3d4 × 5).
99–100	Tyr storm (equivalent to thunderstorm). High of 55°F + (3d4 × 5).

Weather conditions are defined in Chapter 3 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. For simplicity's sake, the temperature high lasts from 1 to 4 P.M. and the low lasts from 1 to 4 A.M. The temperature tails off by 5 degrees per hour from 4 P.M. to 1 A.M., and rises at a steady pace after 4 A.M. until it reaches the new day's high at about 1 P.M.

The Heat Dangers in DARK SUN section of the "*DARK SUN Player's Handbook*" in *DRAGON* #319 has rules for functioning in the heat. Characters will find it somewhat difficult to travel in temperatures above 90 degrees because they'll probably take at least a few points of nonlethal damage. Once the temperature is above 110 degrees, characters take damage more frequently. Above 130 degrees, the damage is lethal.

The region between Outpost Three and civilization is a desolate wasteland. Check for an encounter once every hour; the chance of an encounter occurring is 5%. Most of these creatures appear in the *DARK SUN Monster Supplement* (p. 82), but some will appear in *DUNGEON* #111.

STONY BARRENS ENCOUNTER TABLE

d%	Encounter	Average EL
01–03	Thri-kreen hunters (described below)	7
04–06	Black Reavers (described below)	7
07–09	1 crodlu and 1 swiftwing crodlu-tamer	6
10–12	1 sand howler	6
13–15	1d3 zombie swiftwing rogues	5
16–17	1 gith trooper (described below)	5
18–22	1d3 very young spinewyrms (described below)	5
23–26	1d3 Huge viper snakes	5
27–31	1d4+2 baazrags	5
32–34	1d4 belgoi	5
35–40	1d4 jhakars	5
41–45	1 cilops	5
46–58	1d4 swiftwing rogues	4
59–63	1d4 Medium monstrous scorpions	4
64–68	1d3 Huge monstrous centipedes	4
69–73	1 fordorran	4
74–77	1 pterrax	4
78–81	1 razorwing	4
82–86	1 boneclaw baazrag	4
87–90	1 lirr	3
91–95	1 crodlu	3
96–100	1d4 zhackals	3

Thri-Kreen Hunters (EL 7)

> Two lean, dusty thri-kreen twitch their mandibles in your direction as they look at you. Each carries an iron gythka and has a pouch at its hip.
>
> "You're not elves," one says in a raspy voice.

Creatures: These thri-kreen are on the verge of starvation, and they're tracking some of their favorite meat: elf-flesh. They won't start a fight against the PCs unless the PCs look weak or flaunt the fact that they have food. If the PCs attack them, they'll show no mercy.

Thri-Kreen Hunters, Thri-Kreen Rgr4 (2): CR 5; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 6d8+6; hp 34, 32; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+7, +1 *iron gythka*) or +10 ranged (1d6+4, iron chatkcha); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d10+7, +1 *iron gythka*) and +8 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, bite) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+4, iron chatkcha); SA poison, psi-like abilities, favored enemy (elves) +2; SQ thri-kreen qualities, wild empathy +1; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Poison (Ex): Bite, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage paralysis, DC 12. A thri-kreen produces sufficient poison for only one bite per day.

Skills: Hide +8, Jump +47, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Survival +6.

Feats: Deflect Arrows[B], Endurance[B], Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting[B], Quick Draw, Speed of Thought, Track[B].

Languages: Common, Thri-Kreen.

Psi-like Abilities: 3/day—*chameleon*, *know direction*; 1/day: *psionic displacement* and *metaphysical claw*. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a wilder of 3rd level.

Possessions: *+1 studded leather*, *+1 iron gythka*, 6 iron chatkchas.

Tactics: These thri-kreen prefer to strike from ambush, so they withdraw long enough to use their psi-like ability of *chameleon*, which improves their Hide bonus to +23 for 30 minutes at a time. They then try to sneak up on the PCs. If they know a fight is coming, they'll use their *metaphysical claw* psi-like ability (+1 attack and +1 damage for the next three minutes). They use their *greater concealing amorpha* psi-like ability if they need to retreat from battle.

The thri-kreen often throw chatkchas, using Quick-Draw to draw between throws if necessary, then wait for the PCs to charge them. If the PCs do, the thri-kreen unleash a full attack and catch the chatkcha they threw the previous round. With a speed of 50 ft. and a Jump bonus of +47, they have terrific maneuverability.

Development: If the PCs try to negotiate, the thri-kreen might agree to a joint attack on the nearby elves. Their starting attitude is unfriendly, and the following circumstance modifiers apply to PCs' attempts to influence them: PCs offer food (+2); PCs express intent to attack elves (+4); PCs act sympathetic toward elves or have elves among them (–2); PCs insult thri-kreen heritage (–4).

If Hostile (Check Result 4 or Less): Attack immediately. "Die, fleshling!"

If Unfriendly (Check Result 5–14): Warn away, and attack if PCs don't comply. "Leave our hunt the way you came, or you'll be our next meal."

If Indifferent (Check Result 15–24): Agree to coordinate attack, but not detailed planning. "We'll attack at sunset, fine, but stay out of our way."

If Friendly (Check Result 25–39): Agree to coordinated attack, including stealth or undercover. "Plenty of meat for all hunters, eh?"

If Helpful (Check Result 40 or more): Agree to any reasonable plan the PCs suggest. "Our empty bellies can wait."

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs experience for this encounter if they defeat the thri-kreen in combat, or if they jointly attack nearby elves.

Black Reavers (EL 7)

The Black Reavers are a maenad mercenary company hired by the Stel merchant house in Urik. After Gorgoreth tipped House Stel off, they immediately sent a platoon to Outpost Three. The mission: assist House Klethira in the defense of the outpost, unless the outpost had already fallen or Klethira's troops were badly depleted; in that case, kill everyone and seize the outpost for House Stel.

But the duststorm of a few days ago caught the Black Reavers out in the open, killing all the mounts and most of the mercenaries as well. The stragglers have been grimly marching onward with little food or water, trying to reach Outpost Three and complete their mission.

If Gorgoreth sent the PCs to find the Black Reavers, he'll give them passwords that convince the Reavers that the PCs are allies. Otherwise, the Black Reavers' first instinct is to attack.

Black Reavers, Maenad Psy3 (4): CR 3; Medium humanoid (maenad); HD 3d8+3; hp 17, 16, 15, 14; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, *claws of the beast*) or +3 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow); SA outburst, *energy ray*; SQ maenad traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Autohypnosis +8, Concentration +7.

Feats: Greater Psionic Fist, Point Blank Shot, Psionic Fist, Psionic Shot.

Languages: Common, Maenadi.

Powers Known (8 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*claws of the beast*, *prevenom*, *stomp*.

Possessions: Composite longbow (+3 Str), 10 iron arrows, *+1 spiked bronze breastplate*, power stone of *force screen*.

Tactics: A Black Reaver's first action in combat is to retrieve and activate a *power stone of force screen* to get +4 AC for the next minute. Then the psychic warrior manifests *stomp* if there's a group of enemies within a 20-foot cone or uses a longbow or its sonic *energy ray* if targets are farther away. Against targets within 30 ft., the Black Reavers' bows get an extra +1 on attack and damage due to their Point Blank Shot feat.

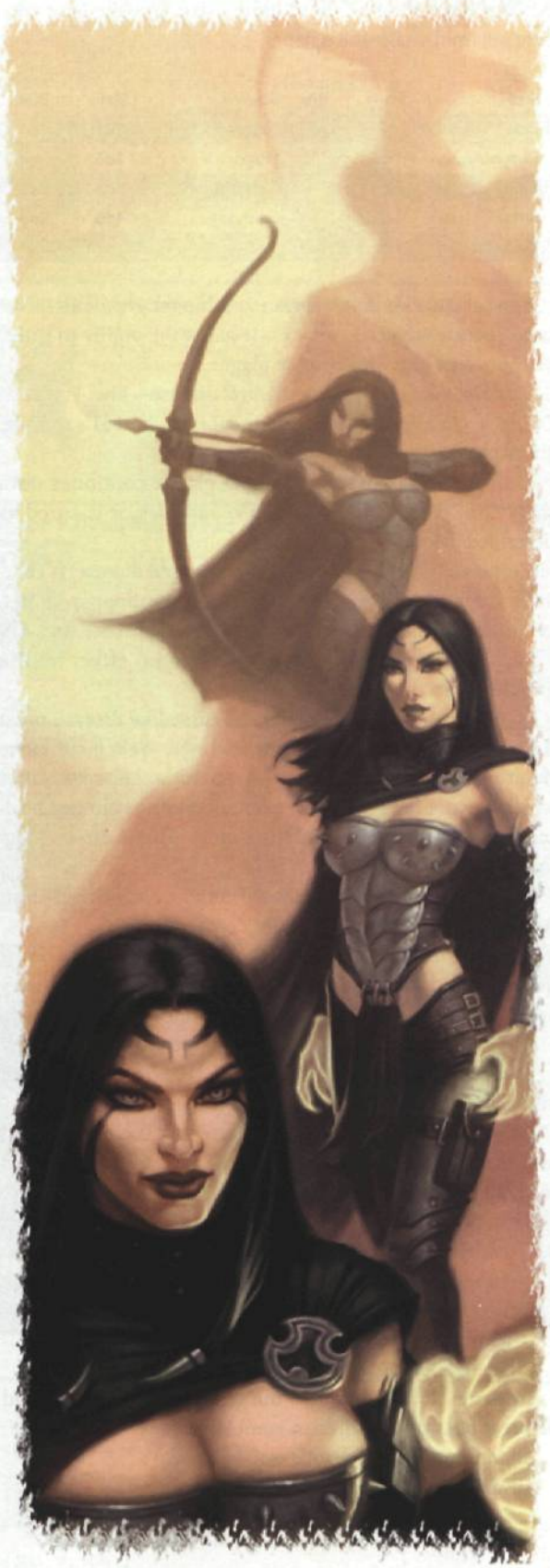
If the PCs engage a Black Reaver in melee, she responds by manifesting *claws of the beast* as a swift action, preferably spending 3 power points to augment the claws so they each deal 1d6 points of damage. The Black Reavers are all psionically focused, so their first successful melee attack deals an additional +2d6 points of damage. Black Reavers who get a round's respite during a fight manifest *prevenom* on their claws so their next attack deals 2 points of Constitution damage (Fort DC 13 negates). The *prevenom* lasts for 3 minutes.

Individual Black Reavers fight until slain, but the group makes a fighting withdrawal once they take half their number in casualties, unless their foes are likewise diminished.

Development: If this encounter seems too tough for the PCs, the maenads have taken 5 points each of nonlethal damage from dehydration and are fatigued from overexposure to the heat. These changes effectively reduce their Challenge Rating by –1.

Gith Trooper (EL 5)

Creature: This is a straightforward encounter with a battle-crazed gith trooper. He attacks on sight.



Gith Trooper, Gith Soulknife 4: CR 5; Medium humanoid (gith); HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/19–20, *+1 mind blade*) or +7 ranged (1d6+5/19–20, *+1 mind blade*); SA mind blade, throw mind blade, psychic strike +1d8; SQ psi-like abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +8, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (medium), Psionic Weapon, Weapon Focus (mind blade)[B], Wild Talent[B].

Languages: Gith.

Psi-Like Abilities: 3/day—*biofeedback, control flames, matter agitation*. Manifester level 2nd.

Possessions: *+1 heartening heavy wooden shield, +1 chitin armor.*

Tactics: The gith's first action is to use its psi-like ability of *biofeedback* to gain damage reduction of 2/— for the next 2 minutes. If it has time, it also activates the *heartening* ability on its shield, giving it 31 hit points for the impending fight.

It then strikes in melee or ranged combat with its mind blade, depending on the situation. The gith's first successful hit with the mind blade against a living foe deals an extra +2d6 (from the Psionic Weapon feat) and +1d8 (from the soulknife's psychic strike class feature) points of damage.

Gith troopers are ordinarily cautious foes, but this one is mad to the point of incoherence. It fights until slain.

Spinewyrms (EL 5)

These very young spinewyrms are simply floating above the Athasian landscape, hunting for food when they spy the PCs. They attack immediately.

Very Young Spinewyrms (2): CR 3; Small dragon (psionic); HD 6d12; hp 39, 38; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +11 melee (1d8+3, bite) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, 6 spines); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+1, bite) and +5 melee (1d4+1, spines) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, 6 spines); SA improved grab, impale, detachable spines, spine volley; SQ blindsense, keen senses, spinewyrm immunities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +14, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10, Survival +10.

Feats: Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite)[B], Weapon Focus (bite).

Tactics: These spinewyrms are aggressive and lack the caution and cunning possessed by more mature spinewyrms. At first they'll stay up in the air, shooting quill volleys that encompass as many foes as possible (all targets of a volley must be within 30 feet of each other). But once their enemies disperse (or after three volleys in any event), the spinewyrms swoop down, making full attacks with their bite and spine attacks. Once they've taken half their hit points in damage, they fight a little more cautiously, using the Flyby Attack feat to avoid attacks from the PCs.

These spinewyrms aren't big enough to grapple the PCs effectively, so they just attack with teeth and spines. They're so aggressive that they fight until slain.

Appendix: Athasian Zombie Template

The world of Athas has almost no unintelligent undead. Whether animated by magic, spawned by other undead, or created through other means, the undead of Dark Sun keenly remember their time among the living, whom they hate with a bitter passion.

The most common form of undead is the thinking zombie of Athas. Negative energy holds their rotting flesh together—for years if the zombie can somehow keep out of the sun, but only for weeks if frequently exposed to sunlight. Unless given specific orders from a master (often its creator or a cleric who can command undead), Athasian zombies wander the world, destroying every sign of civilization they can find.

Creating an Athasian Zombie

"Athasian zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any living corporeal creature that has a skeletal system (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes except alignment subtypes (such as good) and subtypes that indicate kind (such as reptilian). It does not gain the augmented subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Raise the base creature's Hit Dice to d12s. If the base creature has more than 10 Hit Dice, it can't be made into a zombie with the *animate dead* spell.

Speed: As base creature, but no higher than 30 ft. for bipeds and 40 ft. for creatures with more than two legs. If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability drops by one category. If its maneuverability was clumsy to begin with, it can't fly anymore.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by a number based on the Athasian zombie's size:

Tiny or smaller	+0	Huge	+4
Small	+1	Gargantuan	+7
Medium	+2	Colossal	+11
Large	+3		

Base Attack: A zombie has a base attack bonus equal to 1/2 its Hit Dice.

Attacks: An Athasian zombie retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature. A zombie also gains a slam attack and a bite attack (at –5 attack) if it has a mouth.

Damage: Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. The slam attack and bite attacks deal damage depending on the zombie's size. Use the base creature's slam damage if it's better.

Size	Slam	Bite	Size	Slam	Bite
Fine	1	1	Large	1d8	1d6
Diminutive	1d2	1	Huge	2d6	1d8
Tiny	1d3	1d2	Gargantuan	2d8	1d6
Small	1d4	1d3	Colossal	4d6	2d8
Medium	1d6	1d4			

Special Attacks: An Athasian zombie retains none of the base creature's special attacks. It gains the ability to infect victims of its bite with zombie plague.

Zombie Plague (Su): Supernatural disease—bite, Fortitude DC 10 + 1/2 HD + Cha bonus. Incubation period 1 minute. Damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Unlike normal diseases, zombie plague continues until the victim reaches Constitution 0 and dies or is cured as described below.

Zombie plague is a powerful supernatural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with zombie plague must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character.

To eliminate zombie plague, the curse-like disease must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the zombie plague can be magically cured as any normal disease.

An afflicted creature who dies of zombie plague rises as an Athasian zombie three days after death.

Special Qualities: An Athasian zombie loses most special qualities of the base creature. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks.

All Athasian zombies gain damage reduction 5/slashing.

Saves: Base save bonuses are Fort +1/3 HD, Ref +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD + 2.

Abilities: An Athasian zombie's Strength increases by +4, and its Charisma decreases by –4 (to a minimum of 1). It has no Constitution score, and its Wisdom score changes to 10.

Skills: As base creature, but modified to reflect new ability scores.

Feats: As base creature, even if the Athasian zombie no longer meets the prerequisites.

Environment: Warm desert.

Organization: Any.

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1.

Treasure: None, other than the gear the base creature had before it became an Athasian zombie.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: —. Ω

DOWNER part eleven

My Lord, I have infiltrated a gang of Dark Creepers to pass through the city unnoticed, but after days underground, I am no closer to the infamous Illolok.
However, the taint of chaos seeping from the relic is unmistakeable. So begins the fall of Oubliette. -Tagget
ZZART
THONK
THAT DROW'S VESSEL BEARS THE RUNES OF CHAOS!
UNGH!!
STOP!
WHAT ARE YOU HIDING, CAVE ELF? OPEN IT!
YOU WANT WHAT'S IN HERE?
YOU GOT IT. NO PROBLEM, HEH.
SSHHHHRRZM

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter.** Lettering by **Sean Glenn.** A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**

COMRADES!
BY LOLTH'S EMBRACE!
WITHDRAW! WITHDRAW! WE CAN RETURN FOR THE FLAYER LATER!
I'LL BE DAMNED.
I'VE SNARED ONE OF THE OUTSIDERS.
WITH IZANK'S HELP, WE CAN GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS STRANGE INCURSION.
I DUNNO, ZERTHS ARE TOUGH, NOT LIKELY TO FOLD UNDER TORTURE.
BUT THAT'S IZANK'S HANDY CURSE. HE DOESN'T JUST EAT BRAINS, HE DIGESTS MEMORIES.
LEARNS EVERYTHING THEY KNOW.
I FEEL THEIR FEAR AND PAIN. PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME.
C'MON IZANK. WE NEED INFORMATION!
THESE GUYS BREAKFAST ON LIMBO. HE CAN TAKE IT.
YOU MAY FEEL A LITTLE PRESSURE--
TO BE CONTINUED

THE DARK SUN DM'S GUIDE IS HERE!

POLY POLY

Dark Sun Guide to the Tablelands
Explore the City-States of Athas

Dark Sun Monster Supplement
Over 20 New Monsters for Your Campaign

Polyhedron 169

RPGA NETWORK

d20 system

the Dark Sun DM's Guide

Written by David Noonan
Cartography by Robert Lazzaretti
Art by Chris Trevas & James Ryman

Welcome to a desert world ruled by sinister dragon-kings, where only the fittest survive the heat of the sun, the predations of horrid monsters, and the intrigues of their fellows. The *Dark Sun DM's Guide* you're about to read describes the Tablelands, a relatively hospitable part of the arid world of Athas. Seven city-states rule the Tablelands, although their reach doesn't extend far beyond their walls. The desert wastes between the city-states are home to strange monsters, bandit tribes, and ancient ruins.

Dark Sun characters fight in gladiator matches, guard caravans from desert bandits, free slaves from cruel masters, and perhaps overthrow the evil dragon-kings that rule the city-states. They'll be more powerful than PCs in other D&D games, but they'll need every advantage to survive in such an inhospitable world.

Dark Sun is fundamentally a Dungeons & Dragons campaign, changed just enough to bring the desert world of Athas to life. Psionics are integral to the setting; you'll need the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* to fully explore the world of Dark Sun. Most real-world animals don't exist on Athas, replaced instead with strange (and often psionic) creatures. All PCs know at least one or two psionic powers, regardless of their class.

Dark Sun is also an environment of hardship and scarcity. Due to desert temperatures that reach 150 degrees at midday, few creatures wear heavy armor. Metal is so scarce and precious that bone and obsidian are fashioned into crude but deadly weapons. Even magic can be treacherous; wizards face the continual temptation to destroy what little life remains on Athas in exchange for greater arcane power.

Because Athas is such a dangerous place, the character races are all more powerful than their standard D&D equivalents. Humans, for example, have higher ability scores than those described in the *Player's Handbook*, and they have one or more innate psionic powers. Elves, half-elves, dwarves, and halflings are likewise distinct both culturally and mechanically from their *Player's Handbook* counterparts.

DARK SUN also introduces other PC races to the mix, including aarakocras (nomadic bird-men), half-giants (massive creatures bred as slaves), muls (incredibly tough half-dwarves), pterrans (savage lizard creatures), and thri-kreen (four-armed mantis warriors). This incarnation of the DARK SUN setting adds two new races taken from the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*: the elan (cerebral creatures created through psionic ritual) and the maenads (wiry humanoids who are stern in peace and fierce in war).

Sooner or later, most DARK SUN campaigns pit the PCs against one or more of the six dragon-kings, each of whom rule one of the city-states with a tyrannical fist. Once human, the dragon-kings are all epic-level wizards who've defiled Athas in exchange for becoming ageless dragons. Now they rule teeming metropolises with an army of clerics at their disposal, forcing their subjects to worship them as gods and using human sacrifice to sustain their evil power. Each dragon-king is a ready-made master villain for a DARK SUN campaign. Lower-level PCs will have to deal with the intrigues of a dragon-king's clerics and other agents, and the most powerful PCs may eventually to go toe-to-toe with the dragon-kings in a bid to free a city-state from tyranny.

DARK SUN campaigns can begin in or near any of the seven city-states, but two are particularly common choices: Urik and Tyr. Urik is an archetypal city-state, ruled by a cruel but powerful dragon-king named Hamanu. Urik has a powerful army capable of menacing neighboring city-states, and Hamanu continually plots against his fellows. Hamanu's clerics use draconian laws to subjugate Urik's population, but they're unable to completely quash the revolutionary cells that occasionally strike a blow for freedom by freeing slaves or sabotaging one of Hamanu's projects.

Tyr, on the other hand, is unique among the city-states because it's been free of the yoke of a dragon-king for three centuries. Because wizards helped overthrow Kalak the dragon-king, arcane spellcasters don't face the prohibitions and prejudice in Tyr that they do elsewhere. So far, Tyr has managed to weather attacks from other city-states and various coups and counterrevolutions from factions within the city. But the free city of Tyr and its nearby iron mines are a rich prize for the other dragon-kings, so the city's continued freedom is far from assured.

This *DARK SUN DM's Guide* describes the seven city-states in detail and tells of the monsters that inhabit the Tablelands between the city-states. The *DARK SUN Player's Handbook*, in *DRAGON* #319, has the races, classes, equipment, and everything else needed to create a DARK SUN character.

So sharpen your blood obsidian sword and polish your psi-crystals. The world of DARK SUN awaits!

A Guide to the Tablelands

At its heart, DARK SUN is still D&D. We've eliminated the orcs, changed the elves, and made the dragons exceedingly rare, but it's still the game you love—seen through the lens of a very different world.

Fundamentally, DARK SUN is a campaign setting where the bad guys have already won, and now they're merely squabbling over their ruined prize. Viewed from the outside, the major battles on Athas are evil versus evil. When Urik invades Nibenay, there's no noble banner for PCs to rally around, and no order of paladins in shining armor charges into the fray. Two epic-level evil spellcasters throw armies of slaves and conscripts at each other in a battle that continues until even the victor is too exhausted to continue.

Hope is just a small flicker in the world of DARK SUN. But that's what makes it all the more precious, and nourishing that flicker of hope is a central theme in the campaign setting. When the players can wreck the plans of corrupt templars, keep a cell of rebels safely hidden, free some slaves, and protect what remains of Athas's ecology, they've helped keep hope alive. The situation is dire on Athas. Many live in slavery, starvation and thirst are rampant, and leaders are cruel tyrants. The land is barren and inhospitable; over every sand dune lurks another psionic horror hunting down the weak.

Things are bad in the world of DARK SUN. That's why, even in a landscape bereft of water and metal, hope is the most precious commodity of all.

Dark Sun Adventures

Unlike many campaign settings, adventures on Athas rarely involve crawling into a dark hole, fighting the monsters that live there, and taking their stuff back to town. To be sure, there are any number of ruins and fortresses—some of them underground—worth exploring. But DARK SUN adventures often connect to the theme of keeping the flicker of hope alive.

The following are some common adventure tropes for DARK SUN adventures.

Revolution: Tyrants—including some truly despicable villains—control most of the city-states. Many DARK SUN campaigns involve efforts to free the people of Athas from tyranny. Low-level PCs can free slaves, mid-level PCs can plot in revolutionary cells, and high-level PCs can threaten the very dragon-kings themselves. If your players like a mix of intrigue and action, a campaign based on a rebellion against one or more dragon-kings is a good choice.

In some ways, campaigns based in the city-state of Tyr are the reverse of the revolution trope. It's a place where a fundamentally good-intentioned leadership must quash coup attempts from sinister cults and shadowy cabals. This time it's the rebels who are evil, and the PCs keep hope alive by protecting the one city-state outside the reach of the dragon-kings.

Ecological Fable: In DARK SUN, sinister forces can gain more power for themselves by destroying nature. See any connections to real life? DARK SUN is a world that's been almost completely destroyed by power-hungry dragon-kings and lower-level defilers. Just as the rebel cells in the cities try to maintain hope by battling the tyrants, so too do the defenders of the wilderness keep hope alive by repairing the devastation the defilers have left in their wake.

ATHAS AND THE PLANES

Most DARK SUN campaigns work best if the action takes place on Athas itself. The Material Plane is in crisis, and the characters' efforts to preserve life and nurture freedom on Athas are central to the world of DARK SUN. Accordingly, the DARK SUN cosmology is as simple as possible, providing access to other planes of existence without making them particularly desirable places to visit.

Athas is the Material Plane, of course, and it coexists with the Ethereal Plane (called "the Gray" by the Athasians who know of its existence) and the Plane of Shadow (called "the Black"). Beyond the Gray and the Black are the four Elemental Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. There aren't any Outer Planes; outsiders live on more hospitable parts of the Elemental Planes or in the Gray or the Black.

Casting spells such as *etherealness* takes the spellcaster to the Gray, a smoke-bound place where a translucent, insubstantial version of the Material Plane can be seen. Visitors to the Gray can also will themselves to float beyond the parts of the Gray that touch the Material Plane. This functions like the Deep Ethereal (described on p. 55 of the *Manual of the Planes*), but the destination is a hazy, featureless void beyond time and space itself. This part of the Gray functions just like the Astral Plane, except that astral pools lead only to the elemental planes, the Black, and back to the Material Plane. Distant regions of the Gray also have cosmic wellsprings from which spring great gouts of pure, positive energy (effectively functioning as a Positive Energy Plane).

The *shadow walk* spell provides access to the Black, a continually shifting, twisted place that imperfectly mirrors the Material Plane—much like the Plane of Shadow described in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. Like the Gray, the Black has regions far from the Material Plane accessible to travelers with the will and courage to visit them. With an act of will, the dark reflections of the Material Plane fade away, and the traveler walks the alien landscapes of the deep Black. Somewhere within this part of the Black is the prison of Rajaat, discoverer of arcane magic and creator of the dragon-kings. Other regions of the Black are suffused with negative energy, functioning as a Negative Energy Plane.

The four Elemental Planes have landscapes dominated by the relevant element, as described in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. They are populated by all manner of outsiders, some good and some evil. If you create your own monsters for a DARK SUN game, create some outsiders from the Elemental Planes that function like the angels, demons, and devils of a traditional D&D game. Some elementals and outsiders rival the dragon-kings themselves in personal power, so they make good long-term patrons or campaign-climax villains.

THE TABLELANDS
Kalidnay
Lost Oasis
Tyr
Forest Ridge
Ringing Mountains
Fort Ianto
Fort Skonz
Hidden Village
Ogo
Fort Amber
Kled
Fort Iron
Malka
Ablath
South Ledopolus
Silver Spring
Urik
North Ledopolus
Gulg
Fort Sandol
Shazlim
Dragon's Bowl
Fort Harbeth
Great Ivory Plain
Nibenay
Fort Isus
Yaramuke
Fort Fyra
Balic
Last Port
Raam
Outpost 19
Bleak Shore
Bodach
Fort Inix
Alfala
Cromlin
Fort Ebon
Fort Firstwatch
Samarah
Giustenal
Draj
Estuary of the Forked Tongue
Bitter Well
Arkhold
Waverly
Lake Island
City
Village
Fort
Oasis
Ruins
Bleak Tower
The Sea of Silt
Isle of Bones
N

Survival: One way to emphasize the tenuous nature of hope in DARK SUN campaigns is to create adventures in which the PCs' goal is simply to survive. At the end of the adventure is no treasure chest, no cheering crowd, and no grateful rescued maiden. The successful characters are simply still alive when it's all over. Often these adventures involve surviving in the wilderness for long periods of time, dealing with both natural hazards, vicious monsters, and heartless desert raiders.

The urban version of the survival trope is the gladiatorial arena. Different arenas have different rules, but it's often "kill or be killed." While the characters can earn a measure of fame (and perhaps even some money) from gladiator matches, the primary goal is survival. (If you want more ideas for gladiator adventures, see Chapter 4 of the *Complete Warrior* or DRAGON #303).

Survival adventures are a good way of reminding players that the world of DARK SUN is a harsh, unforgiving place. But don't relentlessly throw the PCs into one survival situation after another, because a steady diet of survival-only adventures can be demoralizing to the players. Use a survival adventure to emphasize how tough Athasian life is and how precious hope can be. Then give the PCs an adventure where they can take a tangible step that nurtures that hope.

Dark Sun Time

The standard calendar on Athas is the Calendar of Kings, which measures time from the founding of the city-states and the start of the Green Age more than 14,000 years ago. It's currently the Year of Desert's Reverence in the 194th King's Age.

Each King's Age is 77 years long, and each year within an age has its own name that depends on two astronomical patterns: the endlean cycle and the seofean cycle. The name of a particular year is simply a combination of the endlean cycle name and the seofean cycle name.

Endlean Cycle	Seofean Cycle
Ral's	Fury
Friend's	Contemplation
Desert's	Vengeance
Priest's	Slumber
Wind's	Defiance
Dragon's	Reverence
Mountain's	Agitation
King's	
Silt's	
Enemy's	
Guthay's	

With each new year, the calendar simply moves to the next endlean name and the next seofean name. If it's the Year of Desert's Reverence, the next year will be the Year of Priest's Agitation, then the Year of Wind's Fury. After every Year of Guthay's Agitation, a new King's Age begins with a Year of Ral's Fury.

A year is 375 days long and divided into three 125-day phases: high sun, sun descending, and sun ascending. The phases are marked by slight differences in the sun's astronomical behavior; there aren't seasonal differences in the weather or the length of daylight. Most denizens of the city-states simply refer to a particular day as the "51st of High Sun" or the "124th of Sun Descending."

A day is divided into 24 hours, called "bells" for the hourly chimes that ring in most city-states. Because sunrise and sunset are exactly 12 hours apart on Athas, they're used to mark the time as well. For example, most workers get out of the heat by 6 bells after sunrise, return to manual labor at 9 bells after sunrise, eat supper at 2 bells after sunset, and fall asleep by 5 bells after sunset. Each new day begins at sunrise.

Previous DARK SUN campaigns started in the 190th King's Age. We've moved the timeline forward to create a "safe harbor" where you can set your campaign without worrying about continuity with published DARK SUN materials. But you can use those sourcebooks and adventures as inspirations for your game—they represent an important time of upheaval in Athas's history.

Demographics

The rules in Chapter 5 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* apply, except that each of Athas's metropolises has a magical power center—the dragon-king who rules it. The sole exception within the known parts of Athas is the city of Tyr, which has a conventional power center—a squabbling council of nobles.

To figure out the highest-level psionic characters in a community, consult the table below as a supplement to the similar table in Chapter 5 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*.

HIGHEST-LEVEL PSIONIC LOCALS

Class	Character Level
Psion	1d8 + community modifier
Psychic Warrior	1d6 + community modifier
Soulknife	1d3 + community modifier
Wilder	1d4 + community modifier

Racial demographics vary widely on Athas. Slave tribes have disproportionate numbers of muls and half-giants (described in *Dragon* #319), while the city-states teem with humans and half-elves. The following table replaces the similar table in Chapter 5 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*.

RACIAL MIX OF COMMUNITIES

City-State	Smaller Settlement	Slave Tribe
80% human	70% human	40% human
8% mul	16% one other race*	25% mul
5% dwarf	6% half-elf	15% half-giant
4% half-elf	5% dwarf	5% half-elf
2% half-giant	2% mul	5% dwarf
1% other races*	1% other races*	10% other races*

* Aarakocra, elan, elf, halfling, maenad, pterran, thri-kreen. These races are either relatively rare or they tend to congregate in their own communities.

City-States of Athas

The Tablelands, Athas's settled region, have seven city-states, each several thousand years old and ruled by a dragon-king and legions of templars, clerics who serve the dragon-kings they consider living gods. While smaller communities eke out an existence across the Tablelands, the city-states have the armies and the magical might to dominate the region. But the dragon-kings are bitter rivals, so no single city-state rises above the others for long.

About 300 years ago, in the Year of Priest's Defiance of the 190th King's Age, upheaval swept across the city-states as the dragon-king of Tyr, Kalak, died trying to achieve godhood. Rajaat, an ancient arcanist who created the dragon-kings, briefly escaped his extraplanar prison to kill Tectuktitlay of Draj and banish Andropinis of Balic. Abalech-Re, dragon-queen of Raam, died in battle with a human wizard. For a time, only Urik, Nibenay, and Gulg had dragon-kings ruling them, and many revolutionaries proclaimed the rise of an "Age of Heroes."

Alas, it was not to be. A kaisharga (psionic lich) known as Dregoth the Savior seized control of Raam and became its dragon-king. The templars of Draj created a figurehead to rule as the new dragon-king, but their puppet, a boy named Atzetuk, secretly developed enough power to become a true dragon-king in his own right. Balic fell into decades of chaos, but Andropinis eventually returned from extraplanar exile at the head of a maenad army. Only the city-state of Tyr never replaced its dragon-king.

But the time of upheaval tested the dragon-kings' ability to enforce their will on their subjects. Even the strongest dragon-kings spent decades defending their holdings from the predations of their rivals and the threat of internal strife. Only now are they beginning to exert their influence beyond the walls of their cities and plot the demise of their rivals.

HOW TOUGH IS A DRAGON-KING?

While they often demand that their subjects worship them, the dragon-kings aren't deities. They are the most powerful individuals in the world, however, combining the versatility of an epic spellcaster with the sheer toughness of a dragon. Plus, they have countless high-level templars and armies at their command.

Complete stats for a dragon-king would be useful only to the small number of D&D groups that actually face one in combat. All dragon-kings are epic-level wizards who've performed a lengthy ritual required to turn them into a dragon—a ritual that gives them epic psionic power as well.

If you need to run a dragon-king on the fly, assume they have the physical statistics of a great wyrm dragon, the spellcasting power of a 22nd-level wizard and the psionic power of a 22nd-level psion.

Urik

If there's an Athasian city-state that's stronger than the others, Urik is that city. The dragon-king Hamanu has survived the upheaval of recent King's Ages with his city intact. Urik's military is second to none, and Hamanu's templars keep the streets of Urik orderly with a strict code of laws and swift punishment for lawbreakers.

Demographics: Urik has the standard demographics for an Athasian city-state.

Lands: Urik lies in the middle of the sandy wastes on the northwest edge of the Tablelands. Sandstorms in the area are often fierce, and it is said that only Hamanu's magic keeps the sand dunes from slowly burying Urik. A small, relatively verdant belt surrounds the city for a few miles in every direction, and almost every square inch is tilled to provide food for Urik's teeming masses.

The Ringing Mountains are visible on the horizon west of Urik, although miles of rocky badlands separate Urik from its obsidian mines there. Stony barrens dominate the landscape to the east of the city, where a vast basin known as the Dragon's Bowl holds the tainted waters of Lake Pit.

Settlements: Urik controls the small city of Malka to the northwest, near its most productive obsidian mines. It also has smaller fortified towns in the Ringing Mountains that guard the passes to the Forest Ridge. The small city of Shazlim to the southeast is currently under Urik's control, although Nibenay actually built it and wants it back.

The yellow walls of Urik itself are one of the greatest architectural marvels of Athas. The city's buildings on the other hand are square and squat with little ornamentation. Hamanu has walled off a section of the city, turning it into a complex of palaces and gardens known as Destiny's Kingdom.

Power Groups: Hamanu tolerates no dissent, and because he's had uninterrupted control of his city-state for countless centuries, he has the authority and power to quash any potential rivals.

No one vies for power with Hamanu, but various power groups vie with each other to garner Hamanu's favor. In particular, the templars who control Urik's armies have long had a rivalry with the templars responsible for keeping the city safe and productive. Fights are common between the Legion and the City Guard over both minor slights and major decisions. The Legion wants to march on Tyr or Nibenay, while the City Guard warns that a military campaign would leave Urik overextended and vulnerable.

Beliefs: Worship of Hamanu is mandatory in Urik, with each citizen and slave expected to bow in the direction of Destiny's Kingdom every sunset and sunrise. Hamanu's code of laws is legendary, and his templars enthusiastically mete out justice for every infraction they see. Laws regulate almost every aspect of life in Urik, from how to prepare food to which side of the road to walk on.

Commerce: Urik is well known as Athas's greatest producer of obsidian and blood obsidian weapons. It also exports other gems and minerals gleaned from its mines in the Ringing Mountains.

Weapons made of obsidian and blood obsidian are 10% cheaper in Urik, and the city of Malka counts as a large city for the gp limit on weapons and armor. But Urik craves iron and will pay 75% of a used item's value if it's made of iron. For example, an adventurer could sell an iron falchion in Urik for 562 cp rather than the usual 375 cp.

Urik imports iron (usually from Tyr) and food (usually from Nibenay). Both situations vex Hamanu greatly. Urik's vaunted legions are often victorious on the battlefield but unable to capitalize on their gains because they must pause and re-equip their fragile obsidian weapons. In the past, Urik has tried without success to seize control of the iron mines outside Tyr. The farms immediately surrounding Urik aren't large enough to sustain Urik's citizens on more than a starvation diet, so a war with Nibenay would lead to food shortages almost immediately.

Language: Citizens of Urik tend to speak slowly, peppering their sentences with frequent references to Hamanu such as "may the Lion grant it" or "such is the Code of Hamanu." Because most adults have spent time serving Urik's Legions or City Guard, they are apt to phrase requests as commands, which residents of other city-states sometimes find rude. Rather than ask for a drink of water, a Urikite will simply say, "hand me that jug, citizen."

Arts and Crafts: The carver's art is held in very high regard in Urik, particularly stonecarving (although only buildings in Destiny's Kingdom get architectural ornamentation). Particularly common are statuettes of lions carved from bone (1d10 × 10 cp), granite (1d6 × 100 cp), or obsidian (3d6 × 100 cp).

Entertainment: Roughly twice a phase, Hamanu himself leads a grand parade of templars, legionaires, and circus-like curiosities through the streets of Urik. Attendance is mandatory at these parades for all free citizens, and most slavemasters use parade-viewing as a reward for good behavior. During these parades, Hamanu takes the form of a half-man, half-lion dressed in ornate, golden armor.

As in the other city-states, gladiatorial spectacles are popular, and Urik has several arenas and a daily fight schedule. Particularly popular in Urik are group events featuring two "armies" of gladiators (each with roughly a dozen combatants) that battle to the death before the delighted crowd.

Urik Characters

Characters who come from Urik likely spent time in the city-state's military, whether as slave conscripts or free citizens in a better-equipped "elite legion." Hamanu drafts every able-bodied citizen he can, usually for a year unless he's gearing up for war.

Adventuring Urikites: Most PCs from Urik will be of lawful alignment and have a sense of self-discipline from their time under Hamanu's banners. The majority are fighters, although Urik has several academies of psychic warriors and psions as well.

Alternatively, a PC from Urik might be driven to the life of a wandering adventurer because he found the myriad laws of Urik too stifling. Such a PC might be disillusioned with Hamanu's rule after a friend or family member was punished out of proportion for a "crime" in Urik. What revolutionaries exist in Urik are surely driven by their hatred of the Code of Hamanu, which epitomizes law without the tempering influences of justice or mercy.

Urikites often treat visiting adventurers with a circumspect curiosity. Hamanu closed off the city to the outside world for decades after the upheaval of the 190th King's Age, and the city receives few visitors other than trade caravans. Thus Urikites tend to be curious about the outside world, but they don't want to ask too many questions and attract the attention of the templars. Urik's laws regarding contact with foreigners are complex, and some Urikites reflexively shun outsiders rather than risk breaking a law.

Character Development: Many PCs who spend time in Urik take a few ranks in Knowledge (local) so they don't break the Code of Hamanu. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check suffices to know what Urik's laws are on a common topic (everyday commerce, violent crime, etc.), and a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals law on more esoteric topics (building codes, import/export law, etc.).

One of Urik's great draws for adventuring PCs is the King's Academy, a huge institute devoted to psionic learning within Destiny's Kingdom. Hamanu's templars take children who show signs of psionic prowess to the King's Academy rather than conscripting them into the army, and recently Hamanu has provided limited access to visitors and older citizens of the city-state. Psionic characters can receive training there, but they must contend with the Bureau of Security, which carefully monitors them and assesses their psionic strength.

Urik also has several training centers for psychic warriors, including the Temple of of the South Wind and the Academy of the Phoenix. The templars monitor these training centers, but they don't receive the level of scrutiny that those at the King's Academy receive.

Character Names: Many Urikite names have a Babylonian sound to them. Common names include: Anuta, Mardukai, Kinurta, Assurda, Tukulti, Nutakkil, Shusku, Resha-Ishi, Ashared, Belkali, Shuqa, Erida, Shamsi.

Notable Urikites

Nabu Taekad is a high inquisitor in Urik's Bureau of Security. A graduate of the King's Academy and a templar, Taekad's job is to monitor unusual or powerful visitors to the city using both his psionic powers and the divine spells granted by Hamanu. If the PCs attract the templars' attention during an adventure, they may send Taekad to investigate. Unless he's undercover, Taekad travels with a retinue of four to six 5th-level templars.

Nabu Taekad, Half-elf Clr5/Psion (Telepath) 5: CR 10; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 5d8+5d4+10; hp 44; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8/×3, +1 *iron spear*); SA spells, psionics, rebuke undead; SQ elf traits; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +9, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +4, Psicraft +8, Search +6, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +11, Spot +4.

Feats: Combat Casting, Inquisitor, Investigator, Persuasive, Psionic Endowment, Psionic Meditation.

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Elven, Maenadi.

Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *light, read magic*; 1st—*bane, cause fear, cure light wounds, sanctuary*, shield of faith*; 2nd—*calm emotions*, cure moderate wounds, hold person, zone of truth*; 3rd—*bestow curse, cure serious wounds, protection from energy**.

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Law (cast Law spells at +1 caster level), Protection (*protective ward* grants +5 resistance bonus on next save, 1/day).

Powers Known (43 PP; save DC 13 + power level): 1st—*attraction, crystal shard, demoralize, empathy, mindlink, psionic charm*; 2nd—*aversion, brain lock, detect hostile intent, read thoughts, suggestion*; 3rd—*danger sense, dispel psionics, psionic blast.*

Possessions: +1 bronze breastplate, +1 iron spear, headband of intellect +2, +3 cloak of protection.

Urik Encounters

It takes a great deal of effort to approach Urik without attracting the attention of one of its roving legion patrols.

EL 7: Four 1st-level fighters on kanks. They have orders to stop and question any travelers in the immediate vicinity. Their treasure includes the listed gear and a *tablet of sending* (1,400 cp), which when broken sends a brief verbal message to headquarters.

Urik Mounted Legionnaire: Human Ftr1; CR 1; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/×3, iron lance) or +4 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); SA psionics; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Ride +7, Spot +5.

Feats: Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack.

Languages: Common.

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 10 + power level): 1st—*missive.*

Possessions: Iron lance, composite longbow (+3 Str), 20 iron arrows, shell armor, buckler, kank, saddle, harness, bit and bridle.

Urik Adventures

Because Hamanu takes an active hand in managing the affairs of Urik, there's less of an organized resistance to his rule. As soon as Hamanu or the templars uncover the existence of a revolutionary cell, they crush it ruthlessly.

Accordingly, many Urik adventures involve aspects of the city other than the effort to overthrow a dragon-king.

- The PCs are novice gladiators—willingly or coerced—who team up to survive and potentially win a "tournament of armies" at one of Urik's arenas. At first they'll face other low-level conscripts, but eventually they'll do battle with monsters and well-trained gladiator teams.
- A high-ranking member of House Stel (Urik's largest merchant house) hires the characters as extra guards on a shipment of iron from Tyr to Urik, despite warnings from other merchants that elven raiders have made the main road unsafe.
- A high-ranking templar offers the characters power (magic, political, or otherwise) if they can eliminate the taint from Lake Pit.

Raam

Raam, called the "City of the Dead," is ruled by Dregoth, an undead dragon-king who once ruled the ruined city-state of Guistenal. He seized control of Raam more than 200 years ago, transforming it into a dark city where the living walk side by side with the dead.

Demographics: Raam had typical demographics before the coming of Dregoth. Now fully 20% of the city's population are Athasian zombies, and another 10% are skeletons. The zombies and skeletons perform most of the city's manual labor, so Raam has few laborer slaves.

Lands: Raam lies in the center of scrub plains surrounded on all sides by stony barrens. To the south is a small mountain range that separates the city-state from the Sea of Silt.

Settlements: Dregoth is aggressively building forts and settlements for miles in every direction. In addition to Raam itself, he controls the small city of Break Shore at the edge of the Sea of Silt, and he's building towns throughout the stony barrens. These new settlements produce little of value, so their purpose is a mystery.

But Raam's greatest building project is on the ruins of Fort Ebon, where the psionic lich has an army encamped, ready to defend the ruins against an incursion by Draj's forces. Dregoth has hundreds of undead laborers rebuilding the fort—but rebuilding it as a sinister spire of black basalt with ornate parapets and (it is rumored) a vast underground labyrinth.

Power Groups: Within Dregoth's hierarchy, there's a rivalry between the dragon-king's living templars and his undead minions. The undead have the upper hand, because many templars are reanimated as undead and thus support the faction they may have opposed in life. But the living templars are very useful to Dregoth because they can rebuke and command the low-level undead that comprise much of Raam's labor force.

Two other factions have a measure of power in Raam. The M'Ke merchant house was the de facto ruler of the city for much of the time between Abalach-Re's death and Dregoth's arrival, and they still wield a great deal of influence in commerce and among the nobility. House M'Ke would be pleased if the city-state weren't overrun with undead—they miss the days when they could bribe or coerce a templar into

letting them have their way. The house doesn't oppose Dregoth directly, but it wants as little to do with the undead minions as possible.

Forced underground once Dregoth arrived, the Yellow Monastery is a well-organized group of revolutionaries dedicated to the establishment of a free Raam. Aiding the Yellow Monastery is punishable by death, but many of Raam's free citizens view the rebels kindly because during the days when Raam had no ruler, the monastery managed to feed and protect those in its neighborhood. The monastery building lies vacant and ruined today, but the rebels plot revolution from basements and catacombs across Raam.

Beliefs: Dregoth teaches the denizens of Raam that death is nothing more than a change in state, not a barrier to continued work for the city-state. Many citizens have become inured to the undead working in their midst. But for those who break his laws, Dregoth promises a variety of fates worse than death, including unending torture, the death and reanimation of family members, and other cruel punishments.

Commerce: Raam neither imports or exports much. The few trade caravans that come to the City of the Dead bring luxury goods or iron, and they leave with Raamin pottery.

Most goods in Raam cost the normal amount. Settlements under Raam's control are considered to be one size larger for the gp limit for clerical scrolls and magic items with a necromancy aura.

Language: Few denizens of Raam willingly use the words "dead" or "death." They almost always resort to a euphemism such as "crossing over," "passing on," or "walking beyond us." A loyal Raamin considers the city-state's appellation "City of the Dead" to be a great insult. Raam's templars sometimes refer to Raam as "City of Creation," but no one else does.

Arts and Crafts: Pottery and ceramics are a specialty in Raam, and the smoke from the city's many kilns often makes it hard for the living residents to breathe. Typical treasures from Raam include painted funeral urns (3d6 × 10 cp), glazed ceramic tableware (1d6 × 100 cp), and fine porcelain statuettes (2d6 × 100 cp, or 4d6 × 100 cp if adorned with gems).

Entertainment: Raam has little in the way of public entertainment, because a third of its citizenry is utterly disinterested in even the most beguiling song. Bards perform for Raam's nobles, but lower-class citizens get little entertainment beyond the walls of the city-state's arenas.

As one might expect, gladiator fights in Raam are almost always to the death. One particularly popular battle pits two living gladiators against each other. When one dies, the battle is paused so the loser is reanimated as an Athasian zombie (p. 50), then the battle begins anew. Some intelligent undead make a career for themselves in Raam's arenas, for battles between undead gladiators and living ones are common. But by Dregoth's decree, the undead never face each other in Raam's arenas.

Raam Characters

Raam is an unusual place for a PC to come from. One way or another, those who hail from Raam are marked by their connection with death.

Adventuring Raamins: A typical adventurer from Raam is probably knowledgeable about undead and necromancy. Many grow disgusted with the uncaring zombies and the pervasive evil of Raam and take up an adventurer's life to escape a dismal existence that even death won't end.

Raam is a good choice for a player who wants to play a disaffected templar. Because the undead seem to be taking over, many templars are being forced out of Dregoth's hierarchy or dropping out when they can't stand working for the undead anymore. If you like playing characters who try to make amends for past misdeeds, an exiled templar from Raam is an excellent choice.

Living residents of Raam tend to be welcoming of visiting adventurers, while the undead largely ignore travelers. Dregoth and the templars are too busy with various building projects to pay attention to visitors who keep a low profile.

Character Development: Adventurers in Raam will find that anti-undead spells such as *hide from undead* and *searing light* are particularly useful. But telepaths and enchanters soon find adventuring in Raam more difficult because all undead are immune to mind-affecting spells and powers.

Despite this, psionic characters may be drawn to Raam for another reason. The oldest center of psionic learning on Athas, the Psiumarkh, is headquartered in Raam. The psionic masters of the Psiumarkh take great pains to demonstrate their neutrality and utter disinterest in city-state politics or power struggles. Even when the city was in chaos after Abalach-Re's death, the Psiumarkh simply closed its doors and ignored the riots around it. The Psiumarkh is home to several small colleges and mysterious cabals of psions and wilders, including several factions of the Order. But even the most bizarre psionic cults within its walls are careful not to draw Dregoth's attention by meddling in Raam's affairs.

Character Names: Many Raamin names sound like those of ancient Persia. Common names include: Ardu, Achaemon, Athiya, Buxsha, Cyaxares, Hytapses, Gobrya, Kuru, Thuxra, Vahauka, Shathrita, Vaumisa, Kudra-Kara.

Notable Raamins

Otanes Thispaya is a templar in Raam's Hall of Seers, spending his time researching ancient lore and performing divinations for other templars and Raam's richer citizens. If the characters have esoteric questions about death, undeath, or the Black (see the Athasian Cosmology sidebar, page 62), their inquiries might lead them to Otanes.

Otanes Thispaya, Human Clr13: CR 13; Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d8+13; hp 71; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4–1/19–20, iron dagger); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4–1/19–20, iron dagger);

SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +14; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 22, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Spellcraft +17.

Feats: Brew Potion, Craft Staff, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration.

Languages: Common, Ignan.

Spells Prepared (6/7+1/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *guidance, mending, purify food and drink*; 1st—*bless, cause fear*, command* (2), *comprehend languages, deathwatch, sanctuary, shield of faith*; 2nd—*augury* (2), *calm emotions, detect thoughts*, hold person* (2), *lesser restoration, zone of truth*; 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, helping hand, locate object, speak with dead*; 4th—*cure critical wounds, discern lies, divination* (2)*, *restoration, sending*; 5th—*commune* (2), *raise dead, scrying, true seeing**; 6th—*banishment, find the path*, heal, word of recall*; 7th—*legend lore*, resurrection.*

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Death (death touch 1/day, damage 13d6), Knowledge (cast divination spells at +1 caster level, all Knowledge skills are class skills).

Powers Known (11 PP; save DC 12 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics*; 2nd—*psionic identify*; 3rd—*ubiquitous vision.*

Possessions: Staff of divination (15 charges remaining), *periapt of wisdom +4*, iron dagger.

Raam Encounters

Encounters in Raam almost always involve undead, and they're particularly effective when you put an evil templar in command of low-level undead.

EL 7: A typical city guard patrol in Raam consists of a 5th-level cleric and three Athasian zombies (in this case, former criminals and 1st-level rogues). Their gear is their only treasure.

Raam Templar Patrol, Human Clr5: CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d8+5; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, morningstar); SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +9, Knowledge (religion) +7.

Feats: Combat Casting Extra Turning, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *guidance, light*; 1st—*cause fear*, command, doom, entropic shield, magic weapon*; 2nd—*death knell*, desecrate, hold person, silence*; 3rd—*animate dead*, dispel magic, magic vestment.*

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Chaos (cast Chaos spells at +1 caster level), Death (death touch 1/day, damage 5d6).

Powers Known (6 PP; save DC 11 + power level): 1st—*demoralize*; 2nd—*mental disruption.*

Possessions: +1 bronze breastplate, light wooden shield, masterwork bronze morningstar, *cloak of protection +1*, scroll of *cure critical wounds.*

Raam Adventures

Raam has an active resistance (led by the Yellow Monastery), an aggressive dragon-king, and many mysterious building projects across the region While Raam doesn't make a good choice for a "home base" city for the PCs, it can be the site of a memorable adventure or two.

- The characters are hired by House M'Ke to help guard a caravan leaving Raam. Along the way, they learn that their cargo consists of dead revolutionaries that Dregoth's templars wish to animate and turn against their former allies. The rebels are paying House M'Ke a small fortune to get the bodies beyond Dregoth's reach.
- The characters find a papyrus map detailing a major cache of magic weapons underneath Fort Ebon. But they've got to get past Raam's army outpost, the undead laborers, and a mysterious presence below.
- One of Dregoth's highest-ranking templars promises that "secrets beyond life and death" await anyone who can reclaim Dregoth's former home, the now-ruined city-state of Guistenal.

Draj

While the people of Raam live in fear of the undead that surround them, the denizens of Draj fear the weekly "cullings" of the population for sacrificial victims. The dragon-king of Draj, Atzetuk, is responsible for a bloody reign of terror, using his templars to ritually slaughter dozens of freemen and slaves each week. Some say Atzetuk is mad with bloodlust, while others whisper of an arcane purpose behind the string of bloody sacrifices.

While the sacrificial rituals of Draj are notorious throughout the Tablelands, the city-state is also well known for its warrior culture and the relative freedom enjoyed by its nobles.

Demographics: Draj has the standard demographics for an Athasian city-state.

Lands: Draj sits in the center of a mud flat that interrupts the stony barrens north of the Sea of Silt. Even though the mud flat is cracked and parched much of the time, Draj is still the most fertile of the seven city-states and the only one that regularly exports food.

Northeast of Draj is the Basin of Un-Kar, a vast depression with a flat-topped mesa in the center of it. Many strange monsters emerge from the Basin of Un-Kar to menace the noble farms that suuround Draj. Both Draj's army and the private forces of the noble families spend much of their time fighting marauding monsters and starving tribes of elves and former slaves.

Settlements: A ziggurat the size of a small mountain, the Temple of the Two Moons is visible from every point in Draj.

Therein Atzetuk rules his city, and he personally performs many of the sacrifices from a platform at the summit of the ziggurat. The Temple of the Two Moons has channels carved into its sloping walls that extend throughout Draj, so that after a particularly large sacrifice, blood rushes in a veinlike pattern across the city.

The other notable buildings in Draj are the tecpans, lodgelike buildings where the nobles of the city meet. Unlike the other dragon-kings, Atzetuk gives the nobles a degree of autonomy, allowing them to make some policy decisions and police themselves. But the nobles' independence is more theoretical than concrete; nobles who thwart the will of Atzetuk are often chosen by templars for sacrifices atop the Temple of the Two Moons.

One final building in Draj bears mention: The ruins of the House of the Mind. Formerly a massive academy devoted to psionic learning, Atzetuk destroyed it and all inside when he became a dragon-king. By Atzetuk's decree, the ruins remain untouched, a constant reminder not to draw the wrath of the dragon-king. But once or twice a year, interlopers try to sneak into the rubble and extract a psionic item or other power source rumored to lie among the ruins. The templars catch some, and others simply don't come back, falling victim to a mysterious psionic force somewhere below the House of the Mind.

Atzetuk also controls a major trade oasis to the east, Bitter Well, and a stronghold along the road to Raam, Fort Firstwatch, where his armies observe the construction efforts at Fort Ebon with great interest and trepidation.

Power Groups: Atzetuk's templars, called Moon Priests, comprise the most powerful faction in Draj. Because high-ranking Moon Priests have the authority to "cull" anyone for sacrifice—noble, free citizen, or slave—they generally get what they want. However, they're less apt to meddle in the affairs of the merchant houses or nobles than their counterparts in other city-states because Atzetuk keeps them busy with various sacrifices and other rituals. Only when the security of the city-state is in question will the Moon Priests involve themselves in anything beyond the routine efforts required to keep Draj running.

When Draj's first dragon-king, Tectuktitlay, died almost 300 years ago, his templars conspired with powerful psions from the House of the Mind to install a boy named Atzetuk to the throne as Tectuktitlay's successor. The two groups planned to jointly control the boy as a figurehead, keeping their own positions of power secure and avoiding the riots and destruction that struck Raam and Balic when they lost their dragon-kings. At first their ruse was successful, but over time the templars and the House of the Mind started to disagree on matters of policy—and Atzetuk somehow learned more about magic and psionics than anyone thought possible. With the aid of a splinter group of templars, Atzetuk made the transformation into a true dragon-king, destroying the House of the Mind and cowing the rest of the templars. Once a figurehead, Atzetuk now wields the nigh-limitless power of a dragon-king.

While Atzetuk's templars are the most powerful group in Draj, the nobles wield more influence here than in other city-states. Many noble families control tracts of relatively fertile agricultural land and have become rich selling food and hemp to the merchant house of Tsalaxa for export. Draj's noble families are thus both rich and able to govern themselves—as long as they don't cross Atzetuk. Furthermore, the warrior culture of Draj demands that the head of each household be tested in battle, so the officer corps in the Draji army has as many nobles as it does templars.

House Tsalaxa is the most powerful merchant house in Draj. It has a reputation for ruthlessness and intrigue, but recently infighting among the Tsalaxa family has wracked the house, emptying its coffers. Those members of House Tsalaxa not caught up in the internal battle for control of the house are desperate for lucrative trade contracts and successful caravan trips.

Several groups of druids work secretly within the walls of Draj, while residents embittered by Atzetuk's sacrifices have formed rebel cells of their own. Thus far the templars have been able to quash rebel plots as they uncover them, sending the rebels on one-way trips to the top of the Temple of the Two Moons. But the druids are cautiously establishing a network of rebel cells. Once it grows strong enough, they'll try to overthrow Atzetuk or at least ruin whatever scheme is tied to the ritual sacrifices.

Beliefs: The dragon-king that founded Draj, Tectuktitlay, had a keen interest in having the denizens of the city-state worship him as a god-emperor. He established temples to himself across the city and made faith in Tectuktitlay and the twin moons mandatory. Atzetuk has continued this tradition, claiming a divine right to rule Draj—and eventually all of Athas, his templars promise.

Central to Atzetuk's religion is the belief that ritual sacrifices are required to ward off disasters and misfortune. Atzetuk's templars often point out that Draj was able to avoid much of the chaos that befell Raam and Balic after their dragon-kings died or disappeared. They likewise claim that the sacrifices keep a permanent hurricaine of dust and rain called the Cerulean Storm from moving northward and engulfing them.

Druids working secretly in Draj say that the sacrifices have nothing to do with protection against natural or manmade disasters. But they do have some purpose and often unleash powerful conjuration and transmutation magic, according to revolutionaries who've seen the sacrifices up close. The druids and other rebel cells in Draj would very much like to know the real reason for Atzetuk's state religion.

Commerce: The farms that surround Draj produce food—mostly staple grains—and hemp for clothes and rope. Some of the nobles have surreptitiously started growing sasuril, a fibrous tuber that produces a sensation of lassitude when

infused into hot water (like a tea). Sasuril is illegal in all the city-states because it's highly addictive and it soon renders the user too sleepy to be productive. But for many on Athas, the drug is a release from an otherwise miserable existence.

Draj imports what metal and obsidian it can, but its biggest imports are both skilled and unskilled labor. Between the templars' sacrifices and the back-breaking farm work, life is particularly harsh for slaves in Draj. And once Atzetuk's reign of blood began, many skilled free citizens emigrated to other city-states or smaller communities rather than risk becoming sacrificial victims themselves.

Language: Residents of Draj are known throughout Athas for their characteristic bluntness. A Draji thinks nothing of saying "you smell bad," or "I charge higher prices when foreigners ask." Among the denizens of Draj, everyone's accustomed to direct talk, but outsiders regard the habit as unsettling and rude.

Arts and Crafts: Along with Gulg, Draj is a center for the textile arts on Athas. In particular, rugs and tapestries are regarded as high art, especially when cords that comprise them have been stained with various dyes to create colorful tapestry-mosaics. Typical treasures from Draj include abstract wall tapestries (1d6 × 100 cp), portrait tapestries (4d6 × 100 cp), and deep-pile floor rugs (1d4 × 1,000 cp).

Entertainment: Many of the sacrificial ceremonies at the moon temples across Draj are public spectacles that include dancing, singing, and in particular long orations that praise Atzetuk and provide homilies for Draj's citizenry. The templars who perform major sacrifices are among the most well-known residents of the city. A templar skilled in Perform (oration) can often whip a crowd into a bloodthirsty frenzy, then sate them with an elaborate execution. The public sacrifices are generally well-attended; the crowds gather for the entertainment, the religious sermons, and the free food and drink often available during the ceremonies.

Gladiator battles are also popular, though less so than in Urik or Raam. Many noble families own stables of gladiators, and by custom are bound to free one gladiator slave each season. The possibility of freedom is an attractive lure for many slaves toiling in the fields, and some nobles use gladiator status as a reward for good behavior and high productivity among their workers.

Draj Characters

Draj is a dangerous place to live, but freemen and nobles there enjoy a greater degree of autonomy than elsewhere on Athas. And it's the city-state with the most active resistance to the rule of its dragon-king.

Adventuring Draji: Unless they have specific training in the diplomatic arts, many adventurers from Draj carry some of their characteristic bluntness with them when they adventure elsewhere. Expatriate Draji are relatively common, because many residents of the city leave when they draw the attention of templars before a culling. Others impose exile on themselves or join the underground when friends or family members are senselessly slaughtered on Atzetuk's altars.

Other adventurers from Draj retain some pride in their home city-state—especially those from the noble families. Draj's nobility combines a keen appreciation of military matters with a nascent sense of democratic—or at least oligarchic—ideals. Atzetuk may be a bloody tyrant, but Draj's nobility is proud of its traditions of autonomy, productivity, and martial prowess.

Most residents of Draj make at least a token effort to be hospitable to visitors. After all, they get fewer visitors than most city-states because they're on the edge of the Tablelands—and all of Athas has heard of the rivers of blood that stream from the Temple of the Two Moons. Travelers in Draj are likely to be treated well, as long as they don't take impolite comments from Draj natives personally.

Character Development: Fighters and rangers are more likely to come from Draj than rogues, clerics, or members of the psionic classes. When Atzetuk became a dragon-king, one of his first acts was to crush the House of the Mind, one of Athas's largest centers of psionic learning. Psionics is still regarded with a degree of trepidation in Draj. The House of the Mind may lie in ruins, but Atzetuk's templars seem to apprehend a disproportionate number of psionic residents during their cullings.

Character Names: Many Draji names have an Mayan or Aztec sound to them. Common names include: Abkinzo, Hulnebak, Chaam, Chibirak, Aurukan, Kulitay, Tlacezet, Xodat, Xiutal, Mazatal, Ollin, Tetlak, Quataal.

Notable Draji

Kuliak Talecatcher is a druid devoted to thwarting Atzetuk's larger plans—but he doesn't know exactly what they are. He poses as a freeman weaver in Draj's Dye District, but he also runs an underground cell that sabotages the templars' efforts wherever possible and tries to figure out the meaning behind Atzetuk's many sacrifices. Kuliak can be a useful patron for revolution-minded PCs, and he sometimes rescues victims from the sacrificial altar if they'll be useful to the nascent rebellion.

Kuliak, Half-elf Drd9: CR 9; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +1 *blood obsidian scimitar*); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, +1 *blood obsidian scimitar*); SA wild shape 4/day; SQ nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy +9, woodland stride; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +6 (+8 acting), Gather Information +2, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (nature) +14, Listen +5, Search +3, Spellcraft +14, Spot +5, Survival +16 (+18 above ground).

Feats: Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Natural Spell, Track.

Languages: Common, Aarakocran, Druidic, Pterran.

Spells Prepared (6/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *light, resistance*; 1st—*cure light wounds, longstrider, magic fang, speak with animals* (2); 2nd—*animal messenger, barkskin, cure moderate wounds, reduce animal, warp wood*; 3rd—*call lightning, dominate animal, greater magic fang, poison;* 4th—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, scrying*; 5th—*wall of fire.*

Powers Known (6 PP; save DC 10 + power level): 1st—*psionic charm;* 2nd—*danger sense.*

Possessions: +1 hide armor, +1 blood obsidian scimitar, periapt of wisdom +2, hat of disguise, druid's vestment. Animal companion is an 8-HD boneclaw baazrag (p. 84).

Draj Encounters

At some point during their time in Draj, characters are likely to see templars taking away citizens or slaves to be sacrificed to the greater glory of Atzetuk. These "cullings" occur on a daily basis.

EL 5: This team of templars is assigned to cull someone specific, and they're empowered to make an arrest at spearpoint if necessary. Targets of cullings often flee, and these three templars know that they may be in for a chase. Their gear is their treasure.

Draji Culler, Human Clr2 (3): CR 2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, masterwork iron morningstar); SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +6, Knowledge (religion) +4.

Feat: Combat Casting, Power Attack.

Languages: Common.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic* (2), *guidance*; 1st—*divine favor, endure elements*, magic weapon, shield of faith.*

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day, +4 on attack, extra 2 damage), Sun (greater turning against undead 1/day).

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 10 + power level): 1st—*empathy.*

Possessions: Spiked bronze breastplate, heavy wooden shield, masterwork iron morningstar.

Draj Adventures

Draj is a good place to connect the PCs with an organized resistance movement—whether as patron, ally, or foe.

- An agent of House Tsalaxa hires the characters to take a sealed message from Urik to Draj with great haste. The message contains instructions for establishing contact between two cells of the Draji resistance.
- The characters obtain one half of a powerful psionic item—perhaps an artifact. But sages tell them the other half is somewhere within the ruins of Draj's House of the Mind.

- The characters learn the reason behind Atzetuk's ritual sacrifices, and they have one month to disrupt the powerful energies he's gathering.

Nibenay

Known as the City of Shadows, Nibenay is among the more powerful city-states. Its dragon-king, also named Nibenay, rules from a palace shaped like a massive bust of the Shadow King himself.

Demographics: Nibenay was the city-state where the elan first appeared almost 300 years ago. While they've since spread across Athas, the elan make up 10% of Nibenay's population (reduce the percentage of humans by 10% to compensate).

Lands: Nibenay sits at the northern edge of the Crescent Forest, the only forest of any size in the Tablelands. To the south lies a vast salt flat known as the Great Ivory Plain. Windbreak Mountain to the north provides a measure of protection from duststorms, and it's the tallest mountain in the Tablelands so caravans often use it as a navigational landmark.

Settlements: Each city district in Nibenay has walls that divide it from its neighbors, and templars stand at each gate, querying everyone who passes, noble and slave alike, about their business. Visitors who satisfy the templars' curiosity can move about the city freely, except into the Naggaramakam, a walled district open only to templars in the service of the Shadow King. The districts' high walls block the view of the most unusual dragon-king palace: a bust of Nibenay himself, hundreds of feet high. High-level templars summoned to consult with Nibenay take a steep set of stairs into the mouth of the great statue, then into a maze of corridors and chambers within the bust of the dragon-king.

Beyond the Naggaramakam, Nibenese city planning is more haphazard than in the other city-states, and roads often diverge at odd angles or dead-ends without warning. Many travelers tell tales of getting turned around in Nibenay, hopelessly lost for hours.

Unlike most cities, Nibenay has a surplus of water, including a shallow reservoir just inside the city walls. Wells in the city rarely run dry, and in the last century the city weathered a yearlong siege from Urik until Hamanu's army ran out of water and departed.

Nibenay also controls Fort Isus and Fort Sandol to the north, the first line of defense if Urik attacks again. It also has Fort Inix to the east (used mostly to suppress the elf tribes in the Great Ivory Plain) and Fort Fyra, which guards against monsters from the ruined city of Bodach and incursions from maenad mercenaries out of Balic.

Power Groups: While the templars control the day-to-day affairs of the city-state, the dragon-king's closest advisers are enslaved scholars, not templars. Agents of Nibenay lurk in many academies and colleges across Athas, ready to kidnap or otherwise control sages who possess knowledge that the Shadow King wants. Nibenay spirits them away to Naggaramakam, where they spend the rest of their lives doing research on the dragon-king's behalf. Nibenay has been enslaving the brightest minds on Athas for centuries, so the library within his palace must have extraordinary knowledge in its books, maps, and scrolls.

Among the disaffected nobles of the city-state are those secretly working to overthrow the dragon-king. But two other factions threaten Nibenay from the shadows. The city-state of Gulg has spies everywhere in Nibenay—just as Nibenay has them in Gulg. The Forest Queen of Gulg rarely resorts to direct actions like sabotage or assassination, but little escapes her notice. If Nibenay trains a new legion for its army or begins construction of a soulknife training academy, agents of Gulg are quick to find out about it.

Another force stalks Nibenay: a powerful defiler wizard named Sharabdos, who wants to overthrow the Shadow King and take his place, becoming a dragon-king himself. Nibenay knows he has a rival somewhere in the city, because Sharabdos sometimes defiles nearby sections of the Crescent Forest with his magic. But so far Nibenay's divinations and psychic investigations have failed to catch Sharabdos himself. Sharabdos knows he's not strong enough to conquer Nibenay yet, but he's watching events closely and striking at Nibenay's power structure when he can.

A third faction wields some influence in Nibenay: the elan. The race first emerged from hidden creches near Nibenay about three centuries ago, when the leadership of a psionic secret society known as The Order was wiped out. The Order splintered into dozens of factions, one of which released their most promising research project, the elan race. Over 300 years the elan have spread across Athas, but many consider Nibenay their ancestral home. Some of Athas's most powerful psions are elans living lives of quiet contemplation in Nibenay.

Beliefs: Nibenay has installed himself as the head of a state religion, but he doesn't mandate participation (like Atzetuk of Draj) or have widespread popular support (like Lalali-Puy of Gulg). The templars charged with running the city are called "Shadow Consorts," and they're all female. The only male templars dedicated to Nibenay serve in the city-state's military and rarely step inside the city walls.

Commerce: Nibenay's main export is agafari wood from the trees of the Crescent Forest. While some of the city's nobles have farms near the city itself, others have hereditary title to log a certain number of trees from the forest. But the slaves who do the logging are in great danger, both from the monsters in the forest and from Gulg's headhunter patrols. (Gulg claims the Crescent Forest as part of its territory.)

The standard gear prices apply in Nibenay, except that it does a thriving business in scrolls, books, and other reference materials. Characters selling ancient lore of some sort get 75% of its value in Nibenay, as opposed to 50% else-

where. Characters buying such items (including cleric scrolls, maps, and psionic power stones) find them 10% cheaper in Nibenay than they would be elsewhere.

Language: A Nibenese accent sounds refined to speakers of Common elsewhere on Athas, and sometimes speakers not from Nibenay will affect the long vowels and slow cadence of the Nibenese dialect in order to sound more distinguished.

Arts and Crafts: The art of woodcarving is particularly esteemed in Nibenay, where the dark wood of the agafari tree is used for everything from weapons to small statues of Nibenay himself. Typical treasures from Nibenay include foot-tall statuettes (1d10 × 10 cp), finely carved water goblets (1d6 × 100 gp), and well-tuned xylophones (3d6 × 100 gp).

Entertainment: Dancers are particularly common in Nibenay because they're a favorite entertainment of the Shadow King himself. Nibenay often invites accomplished dancers to perform at the front of his procession when he tours the city that bears his name.

Gladiator battles are as popular in Nibenay as elsewhere on Athas. Particularly compelling are the many psionic battles and "man vs. monster" fights, which Nibenese arenas showcase frequently.

Nibenay Characters

Nibenay is a more mysterious place than many of the other city-states. Its many colleges and academies make it a good place for wizard and psion characters to hail from. It's also the original home of the elan, although not all still live in Nibenay.

Adventuring Nibenese: Adventurers from Nibenay are more likely than most to have some sort of formal training before taking up the wandering life of an adventurer. By the decree of Nibenay, every child in the city-state, citizen and slave alike, is tested by the templars for aptitude in a number of different fields. Children with average test results continue under their family's guidance. But those with particularly good or bad scores can be sent to a prestigious academy, given templar training before becoming a Shadow Consort, or (for particularly bad scores) be drafted as a shock trooper in the Nibenese army.

While most PCs got the specialized training the Shadow King provided, others might bear grudges because they didn't get into a prestigious military school or psionic academy. Such characters are proud to be self-taught, and some relish the notion of proving their superiority to their counterparts who got special training from Nibenay.

Nibenay is reasonably welcoming to travelers—and because it's in the center of the Tablelands, it gets a lot of visitors. Only those from Gulg draw the hostility of the Nibenese. Even travelers from Urik, an enemy city-state just a few decades ago, aren't treated as badly as visitors from Gulg.

Character Development: Characters of a scholarly bent, as well as those multiclassing into a scholarly class, will find Nibenay a place that values learning. PCs with particularly esoteric lore may be asked to teach what they know. Their would-be students might be well-heeled nobles willing to pay, or they might be templars that won't take "no" for an answer.

Among performers, Perform (dance) can be the ticket to a better life in Nibenay. Many ranks in a Knowledge skill can earn you a better life of sorts as well. But the adventuring opportunities for the slave-scholars of the Shadow King are slim indeed.

Character Names: Many Nibenese names have a Babylonian sound to them. Common names include Merodach, Eshar-Haddan, Shamashum, Urkini, Kandalu, Sin-Ishkun, Lassar, Nabukal, Buchad, Nazur, Amel, Markud.

Notable Nibenese

Shaorach is one of Nibenay's most prized scholar-slaves. A cleric of Air, she provides the Shadow King with guidance on matters relating to the Inner Planes, where she's traveled extensively. She's been psionically dominated so thoroughly that she willingly serves Nibenay. But she has brief moments of lucidity where she remembers the joy of gliding on a thermal far above the surface of Athas. In those moments, she'd do anything for the chance to be free again

Shaorach, Aarakocra Clr14: CR 14; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 14d8+14; hp 77; Init +8; Spd 20 ft., fly 90 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4–1, talon) or +16 ranged (1d8+1/×3, +1 *longbow*); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4–1, 2 talons) and +4 melee (1d3–1, bite) or +16/+11 ranged (1d8+1/×3, +1 *longbow*); SA psionics, spells, turn undead; SQ aarakocra traits; AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +15; Str 8, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 22, Cha 8.

Skills: Concentration +18, Craft (bowmaking) +4, Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +8, Spellcraft +10, Spot +8.

Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longbow)[B], Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (longbow)[B].

Languages: Common, Aarakocran, Auran.

Spells Prepared (6/7+1/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (2), *detect poison, light, resistance, virtue*; 1st—*bless, comprehend languages, deathwatch, detect chaos, divine favor, endure elements, obscuring mist*, sanctuary*; 2nd—*aid, bear's endurance, hold person, remove paralysis, lesser restoration, shatter, spiritual weapon, wind wall**; 3rd—*create food and water, dispel magic, gaseous form*, invisibility purge, magic vestment, protection from energy*; 4th—*dismissal, divination, divine power*, restoration, sending, summon monster IV*; 5th—*commune, control winds*, plane shift, raise dead, true seeing*; 6th—*chain lightning*, greater dispel magic, find the path, heal, summon monster VI*; 7th—*control weather*, ethereal jaunt, summon monster VII.*

*Domain Spell; *Domains:* Air (turn earth creatures or rebuke earth creatures 2/day), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with longbow).

Powers Known (3 PP; save DC 9 + power level): 1st—*elfsight*.

Possessions: +1 *studded leather*, +1 *longbow*, 20 iron arrows, *periapt of Wisdom* +4, *strand of prayer beads*.

Nibenay Encounters

Nibenay is a more open cosmopolitan city-state than most, giving PCs who visit there a wide variety of encounter possibilities.

EL 6: These two guards are typical of the templars who quiz those who pass from one of Nibenay's districts to another.

Gate Templar, Human Clr2/Psi2 (telepath) (2): CR 4; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d8+2d4–4; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+1/18–20, masterwork iron falchion); SA psionics, spells, rebuke undead; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Intimidate +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +6, Psicraft +9, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +8, Spot +6.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Inquisitor, Martial Weapon Proficiency (falchion), Psionic Endowment, Weapon Focus (falchion).

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Elven, Maenadi.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, detect poison, light, virtue*; 1st—*command, magic weapon*, sanctuary, shield of faith*.

*Domain Spell. *Domains*: Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills), War (proficiency and Weapon Focus with falchion).

Powers Known (12 PP; save DC 13 + power level): 1st—*crystal shard, detect psionics, empathy, mindlink, psionic daze, telempathic projection*.

Possessions: Chitin armor, masterwork iron falchion, *dorje of energy stun* (20 charges), *crawling tattoo of dispel psionics*.

Nibenay Adventures

Nibenay is in the middle of the map both geographically and politically. Just as Nibenay the city-state is beset on all sides by rivals, so too is Nibenay the dragon-king facing threats from Lalali-Puy, from Sharabdos, and from homegrown rebels. Adventures in Nibenay will quickly ensnare PCs in the machinations of those forces seeking control of Nibenay.

- The characters are hired by a merchant house to rescue their master cartographer, who's been captured by agents of the Shadow King and is even now en route to a life as a scholar-slave in Nibenay.
- An errant *teleport* puts the PCs in the middle of the Crescent Forest, where they'll have to contend with Nibenese army units keeping the forest clear for the slave-loggers and Gulg headhunters killing any interlopers they find.
- Nibenay wants to draw out Sharabdos and deal with him once and for all. He manipulates events so that the PCs serve as bait for the would-be dragon-king.

Gulg

Gulg is perhaps the strangest of the city-states, a city built from living wood and vine where an evil Forest Goddess rules with the enthusiastic approval of her subjects. And Lalali-Puy, the *oba* of Gulg, has a fail-safe for any rival who would seek to unseat her: in a crisis she can defile her own forest-city, drawing on the Tablelands' largest concentration of plant life.

Demographics: Gulg has demographics typical for a city-state, except that 2% of the population are halfling exiles from the Forest Ridge (reduce dwarf and mul populations by 1% each to compensate).

Lands: Gulg lies at the southern end of the Crescent Forest—a forest it periodically goes to war with Nibenay over. To the southeast is a salty flat known as the Great Ivory Plain, and to the west are stony barrens that stretch nearly to Tyr and the foothills of the Jagged Cliffs.

Settlements: Gulg is a city fashioned almost entirely from living wood shaped by the dragon-queen and her templars. The barrier that surrounds the city, the Mopti Wall, is a thick, thorny mass up to 30 feet high in places.

Gulg has no paved roads, only forest paths and trails winding their way through the massive agafari trees. In treetop structures called *dagadas* live the city's residents, with greater altitude indicating greater social status. Only the Foreigners' Quarter has traditional stone buildings. Lalali-Puy herself rules from the tallest tree, in an elaborate tree-mansion known as Sunlight Home.

Unlike the other city-states, Gulg rigidly controls the movement of visitors. Only citizens of Gulg and some members of House Iniki can walk from district to district; outsiders must remain in the Foreigners' Quarter.

Gulg also controls Fort Kalvis to the southwest and and Fort Harbeth to the south. Kalvis guards Gulg's traditional farms, while Harbeth watches for incursions from the dwarf-clans of Ledopolus and maenad armies from Balic.

Power Groups: The dragon-queen Lalali-Puy and her templars have almost absolute control over Gulg. Most denizens of the city realize that life in Gulg is better than the rest of Athas and thank the Forest Goddess for her guidance and protection. The resistance on Gulg is almost nonexistent, consisting mostly of Nibenese agents and druids sent to keep an eye on the machinations of the *oba*.

But different Gulgan factions vie for the favor of Lalali-Puy, each hoping to be the primary instrument of her will. A missionary cadre of templars known as the Seeds of the *Oba* contends that the best way to spread Gulgan influence is to travel far and wide seeking converts to the *oba*'s cause. Lalali-Puy's generals, on the other hand, are agitating for a new crusade that will claim lands for the *oba* at the point of a spear. And House Iniki, Gulg's dominant merchant house, wants to use economic superiority to bring communities under Lalali-Puy's control. While the three factions don't actively thwart

each other's plans, they don't cooperate very well. It's common for a templar, a general, and a trade factor to argue vehemently about how best to do the *oba*'s will—an argument that ends only when an obvious threat to Gulg emerges.

Beliefs: The dragon-queen has established a state religion, but (unlike the religions developed by the other dragon-kings) hers is a widely practiced faith. Most Gulgans willingly worship Lalali-Puy as a goddess, praying for the day when she restores Athas to fertility and prosperity. Resistance to Lalali-Puy's rule is almost nonexistent within the thorny walls of Gulg.

After the upheaval of three centuries ago, Lalali-Puy took a more active role as head of her religion, declaring a "great crusade" to spread the word of the Forest Goddess throughout Athas. Wherever trees grew, she said, the *oba* would rule, until eventually all of Athas would be a vast forest under her control. Lalali-Puy's great crusade resulted in her armies marching simultaneously on on Nibenay and Tyr, but ultimately failing to capture either city. Gulg's armies have since retreated, although her templars have begun to speak of a "second crusade" to claim more of Athas for the Forest Goddess. But one of the lasting effects of Lalali-Puy's crusade is that word reached the halfling communities of her reverence for forest life. The halfling elders realized that no dragon-queen would ever truly have the interest of a forest at heart, but a minority among the halflings were swayed by the words of her missionary templars and came to live in Gulg. Today, any halfling exiled from the tribes of the Forest knows she can find a welcoming halfling community in Gulg if she can travel there safely.

Commerce: Gulg exports kola nuts, a wide variety of spices, and silk garments to the rest of Athas, selling most of it through House Iniki.

Metal weapons, on the other hand, are harder to find here than elsewhere, costing 10% more than they otherwise would.

Language: Residents of Gulg are likely to punctuate their sentences with gestures, ranging from clenched fists (indicating anger) to loud clapping (indicating excitement or approval). In effect, the Gulgans have a simple sign language with a few dozen signs that augments their use of Common. The gestures cover simple, common concepts, so it's not hard for outsiders to figure out that a cupped hand means "more" or that crossed arms means "done."

Arts and Crafts: Gulgan artisans work in wood much as their Nibenese counterparts do, but because the *oba* doesn't permit logging of the Crescent Forest, they don't have much raw material to work with. Some gulgan plantations around the city raise the silkworms that create raw silk. Slaves weave fine silk garments that House Iniki then sells across Athas.

Another item from Gulg that's available across Athas are hanuni trees. These miniscule trees are about a foot tall and grow within a ceramic pot if given even a little water. Many domiciles throughout Athas keep a hanuni tree as a talisman of luck and prosperity.

Entertainment: Gulgans enjoy many of the same entertainments as residents of other city-states, but Gulg doesn't have the large amphitheatres and arenas that other places do. Instead, each neighborhood has smaller meeting places where gladiatoral matches and musical performances take place.

The musical arts are of particular interest in Gulg, where many fine musical instruments from flutes to ouds and drums are made. It is said that a particular chamber in the Forest Goddess' palace is so acoustically perfect that a note played there can be heard minutes later. Occasionally a performer of great skill will get an invitation to play for Lalali-Puy herself. Such invitations are the highest honor a Gulgan musician can receive, but they also mark the end of a career. Those who play for Lalali-Puy are never heard from again, and the Forest Goddess' templars remain silent as to their fate.

Gulgan Characters

Characters with both a connection to nature and a sense of city life often come from Gulg. PCs from Gulg often retain a degree of loyalty to their dragon-queen. She may be evil, but she's far more palatable than many of her dragon-king counterparts.

Adventuring Gulgans: Some Gulgans explore Athas with an eye toward bringing the power of the Forest Goddess there eventually, telling others how eventually a carpet of green forest will cover the Tablelands again.

Other PCs from Gulg are more pragmatic and even disillusioned. Once they've left the relative safety of Gulg's thorny walls, they realize that no forest can ever encompass Athas—the world is too ruined for the Forest Goddess' vision to become reality. And some PCs see a more sinister reason why a dragon-queen—surely a powerful defiler—wants to grow immense forests around her city.

Gulg's residents tend to treat visitors poorly. Even the more diplomatic Gulgans sometimes let slip a sense of Gulg's superiority, while the less polite prosletyze on behalf of the Forest Goddess or simply shun those who don't venerate the *oba*.

Character Development: Skills such as Knowledge (nature) and Survival are more important to Gulgans than to denizens of the other city-states. Few slaves work farms near Gulg, but many are trained to gather berries, nuts, and spices from the Crescent Forest.

Character Names: Many residents of Gulg have names reminiscent of North African names. Common names include Akir, Harath, Tarabi, Tabil, Naeam, Zaed, Reyaka, Takriyt, Majiid, Thaliq, Niza, Gauram.

Notable Gulgans

Hathali is a merchant of House Iniki specializing in small spice and kola-nut caravans. She often hires locals to help guard her caravans; she's a competent caravan-master, but she tries to convert those in her employ to the worship of Lalali-Puy.

Hathali, Human Rog7: CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d6; hp 24; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork iron rapier) or +8 ranged (1d6/×3, shortbow); SA sneak attack +4d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 19.

Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Forgery +10, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (geography) +5, Listen +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11, Survival +6 (+8 avoiding hazards).

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Speed of Thought, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common.

Powers Known (6 PP; save DC 13 + power level): 1st—*detect psionics, know direction and location.*

Possessions: +1 studded leather, masterwork composite shortbow, 20 iron arrows, masterwork iron rapier, *cloak of charisma +2, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of glibness.*

Gulg Encounters

Most encounters in Gulg are with loyal subjects of Lalali-Puy—or other visitors within the foreigners' quarter.

EL 7: Among the more notable units in Gulg's army are the head hunters, groups of rangers dedicated to Lalali-Puy. This group of four head hunters patrols the Crescent Forest, beheading the interlopers they find. Their gear is their treasure.

Head Hunter, Human Rgr3 (4): CR 3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow) or +6/+6 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); SA archery combat style, favored enemy (human) +2; SQ wild empathy +2; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +9, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 following tracks or avoiding hazards).

Feats: Endurance[B], Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot[B], Track[B], Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Masterwork composite (+3) longbow, 20 iron arrows, masterwork blood obsidian longsword, masterwork studded leather, buckler, *potion of invisibility.*

Gulg Adventures

Adventures in Gulg almost always mean contact with the agents of Lalali-Puy, whether as patrons, allies, or foes.

- A group of missionary templars from Gulg have been imprisoned in Tyr for too-aggressive proslytizing. Some of

Lalali-Puy's templars hire the PCs to secure their release any way they can.

- The low-intensity skirmishes in the Crescent Forest between Nibenese and Gulgan forces degenerate into open warfare—when the PCs happen to be in the middle of the forest.
- A group of druids have approached Lalali-Puy with offers of alliance, seeking to help her reforest Athas. Other druids are aghast at the very notion of allying with a defiling dragon-queen and ask the PCs to break up the alliance.

Balic

Balic was one of the weakest city-states on Athas until a century ago, when the dragon-king Andropinis returned from extraplanar imprisonment at the head of an army of strange humanoids called maenads. Since he reconquered Balic, Andropinis has embarked on ambitious construction and military plans, intending to restore the city-state to its former glory.

Demographics: Fully 20 percent of Balic's population are maenads brought to Athas by Andropinis. Some 70 percent are human, 5 percent mul, 2 percent dwarf, 2 percent half-elf, and 1 percent other races.

Lands: Balic is set apart from the other six city states on a promontory jutting out into an arm of the Sea of Silt called the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. Balic sits at the point where the estuary forks northward toward the dwarven cities of Ledopolus and due west toward the runes of the city-state of Kalidnay.

Due to its proximity to the Great Cerulean Storm, Balic is buffeted by Tyr-storms on a regular basis. Elsewhere, Athasians would be glad to receive Balic's periodic rainfall, but the Tyr-storms strike with such high winds and heavy precipitation that crops are as likely to be ruined as nourished by the storms.

Settlements: Balic is unique among Athasian city-states because it has a primitive harbor and port. While Athas has no oceans, massive wheeled ships called silt sailers can navigate the Sea of Silt. Balic's merchant houses provide a lifeline to communities on the edge of the Sea of Silt such as Samarah, Alfala, and Last Port. These settlements are completely under Andropinis's thumb. While Balic once had forts guarding the land approaches to the city, they were sacked during the disorder that followed Andropinis's disappearance, and the dragon-king hasn't rebuilt them yet.

Andropinis has focused his attention on rebuilding the alabaster towers that once crowded the Balician sky. When Andropinis returned from imprisonment in the Black, he found half of Balic in ruins. Andropinis swept the Trade Lords from power, enslaving many of them and putting them to work rebuilding Balic just as it was 300 years ago.

Power Groups: Rajaat, the creator of the first sorcerer-kings, imprisoned Andropinis on a demiplane within the Black 300 years ago during the same struggle that killed Tectuktitlay and Abalach-Re. But Andropinis still had the immense power of a dragon-king, so he found a circuitous escape route through a series of demiplanes, each stranger and more menacing than the last. On one such plane he found the maenads, a race of people likewise trapped within the Black. Andropinis created a ritual that brought himself and the maenads back to Athas during the 193rd King's Age. Grateful for his help, the maenad clans pledged their fealty to Andropinis. Andropinis's army to this day is more than half maenad, and even some of his templars are maenads.

Two merchant houses, House Tomblador and House Rees, have headquarters in Balic, but neither is particularly strong because Andropinis intentionally harasses the merchant houses. Andropinis used his maenad army to recapture Balic from the self-styled "Trade Lords," formerly members of the Wavir merchant house who seized control of the city rather than let it fall into disorder and ruin. The dragon-king utterly destroyed House Wavir, but he still doesn't trust merchants.

While Andropinis rules Balic with an iron fist, his reach is far from absolute. Descendants of House Wavir and the Trade Lords still plot in secret, dreaming of a return to power. And many of the maenad clans are growing dissatisfied with Andropinis's rule. The better lives Andropinis promised them have evaporated in the hot sun of Athas, and the dragon-king seems far more interested in his former subjects than he is in the maenads who sacrificed so much to free him from the Black.

Beliefs: Before his imprisonment, Andropinis cloaked himself in the trappings of democracy, claiming to be a dragon-king freely elected to his position. Templars had 10-year terms of office, and high-ranking templars had to have their positions confirmed by the Chamber of Free Citizens and the Chamber of Patricians. But since his return, Andropinis has made no move to reestablish democratic reforms. At first, free citizens demonstrated for elections and reestablishment of the Chambers. But after legions of maenads dispersed several demonstrations, the residents of Balic realized that Andropinis was not about to share power.

Today, the residents of Balic and the maenads encamped beyond the city walls are unsure what Andropinis's plans are. Andropinis seems to be concentrating on rebuilding, but he makes few decrees or pronouncements.

Commerce: Balic is in a relatively fertile spot, with silty soil ideal for growing the gorvath berries used in dark wine and other liquors. Balic also controls a number of small mines set into the rocky outcroppings that emerge like towers from the Silt Sea.

Prices in Balic follow the D&D standard, with the exception of labor prices. Both skilled and manual laborers fetch a price 20% higher than normal, whether that price is expressed in wages (for freemen) or an actual price (for slaves). The lone exception to the labor shortage is soldiers, which Balic has in abundance due to the maenads. Many maenad clans and

other Balician groups have formed mercenary companies that work for whatever city-state or merchant house will pay them. So far Andropinis has turned a blind eye to the private armies based in and around his city-state.

Language: The Balician dialect has Maenadi words sprinkled throughout it—another reflection of how some maenads are assimilating into Athasian society. And roughly one-fifth of Balic's nonmaenad population speaks Maenadi as a second language.

Arts and Crafts: Most of Balic's artisans have been hired, drafted, or enslaved to work on dozens of public works projects in various stages throughout the city. Accordingly, there's no strong theme to Balician arts and crafts. Items made of alabaster often come from Balic, as do many expensive liquors. Typical treasures from Balic include alabaster armbands (1d6 × 100 cp), vintage darkwine (2d6 × 100 cp), and alabaster-and-gold necklaces (3d6 × 100 cp).

Entertainment: Balic is the only city-state with organized theatres, where troupes of actors play out ribald comedies and melodramatic tragedies. Templars are present to ensure that dramas don't contain subversive elements.

Balic also has some of the bloodiest gladiator arenas in the Tablelands, owing to the surplus of former soldiers in the area. The maenads in particular have taken to the Athasian gladiator sports with relish, throwing themselves into battle with abandon.

Balic Characters

Many maenad PCs are from Balic. It's also a good choice for any PC who wants to be from someplace exotic and far-off. The other six city-states have less commerce with Balic simply because it's so far away.

Adventuring Balicians: Wanderlust motivates many maenad PCs from Balic; as relatively recent arrivals to this new world, some maenads are eager to explore it.

Other PCs might take to the adventurer's life out of frustration. Maenads in particular are frustrated with Andropinis's obsession with rebuilding Balic. When they left imprisonment in the Black, they thought they'd be the vanguard of a conquering army in a new world teeming with life. Instead they find themselves encamped in the desert season after season while their ostensible savior builds temples in his own name and coddles the native residents of Balic.

When confronted with a traveler, Balicians tend to be reserved but polite. They also tend to be unimpressed with visitors displaying martial prowess, because skilled warriors are plentiful in and around the city-state.

Character Development: Whatever their class, PCs in Balic will find that they aren't the only ones seeking to master their abilities. Among Andropinis's first priorities was the reestablishment of the Cerebran, an excellent psionic university. He also built the Shrine of the Reconquest, an academy that trains would-be psychic warriors in the mental and physical combat styles of the maenads.

Character Names: Many Balician names sound somewhat Egyptian or Greek. Common names include Namarar, Menei, Fortari, Rauses, Murkatal, Neferet, Khasek, Djetu, Akenun, Mutesankh, Meryneith, Hebreni.

Notable Balicians

Simiath is the captain of the *Fortunate Wind*, a silt sailer that makes trade runs up and down the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. If the price is right (or the lure of treasure is compelling enough) he'll sail far out into the uncharted islands of the Silt Sea, where both ruined cities and terrible monsters await.

Simiath, Dwarf Rog6/Wil3: CR 9; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 9d6+9; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian shortsword) or +10 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, +1 *hand crossbow*); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6+1/19–20, masterwork blood obsidian shortsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, +1 *hand crossbow*) or +8/+8/+3 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, +1 *hand crossbow*); SA sneak attack +3d6, wild surge +2; SQ dwarf traits, elude touch, evasion, psychic enervation, trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Balance +17, Climb +12, Escape Artist +3 (+5 with ropes), Jump +5, Listen +11, Profession (silt sailor) +14, Spot +14, Survival +11, Tumble +17, Use Rope +12.

Feats: Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload (hand crossbow), Rapid Shot.

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Terran.

*Powers Known (*15 PP; save DC 11 + power level*):* 1st—*force screen, know direction and location, vigor.*

Possessions: +1 floating studded leather, masterwork blood obsidian short sword, +1 *hand crossbow,* 10 iron crossbow bolts, *glove of storing.*

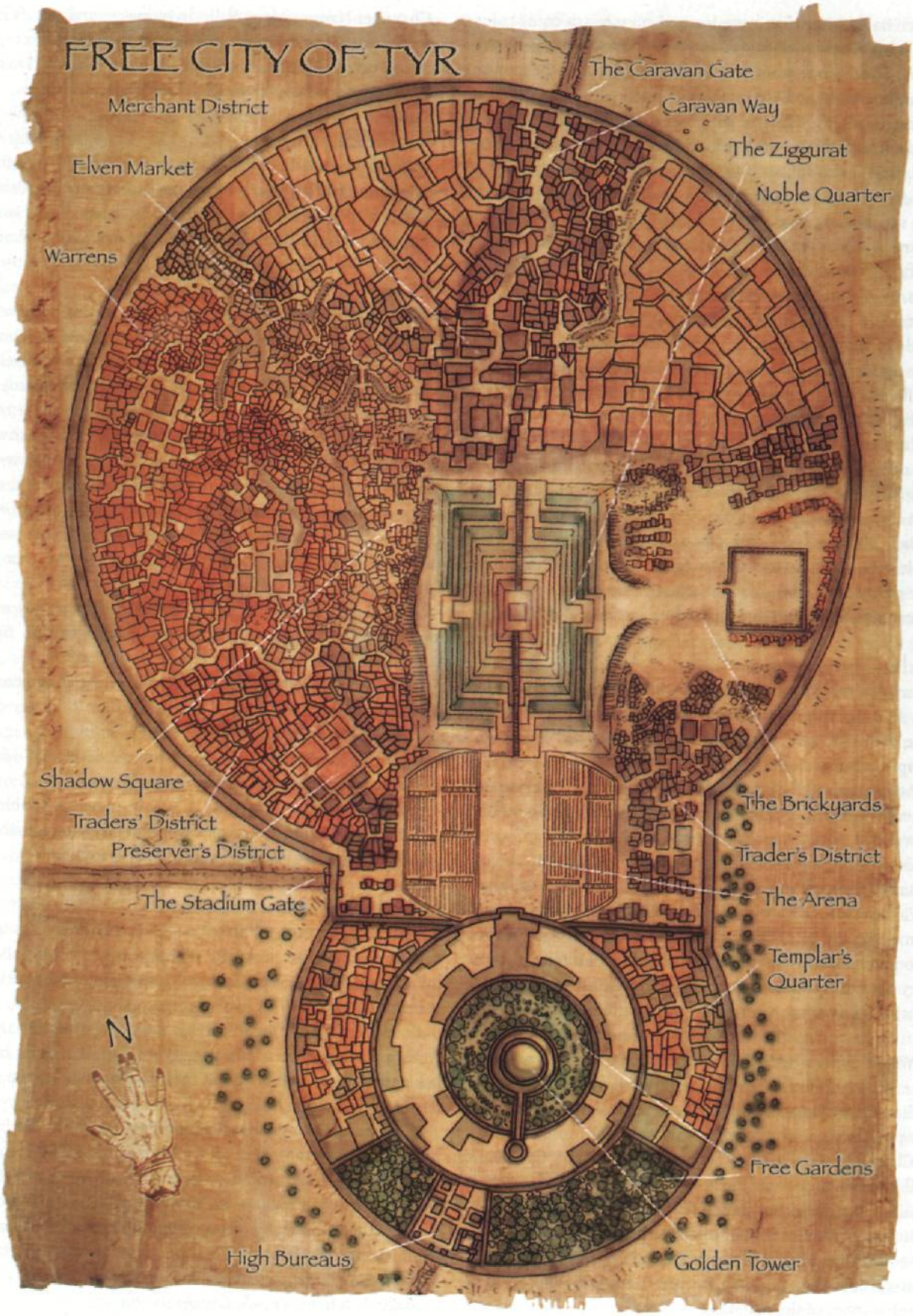
Balic Encounters

Balic is a good place to introduce the maenads to PCs who haven't encountered them yet. It's impossible to reach Balic by land without seeing several great encampments of maenad legions.

EL 8: These five maenad psychic warriors patrol the city at Andropinis's request. They aren't templars and don't have law enforcement authority, but they'll act quickly to stop any obvious lawbreakers.

Maenad Legionnaire, Maenad Psy3 (5): CR 3; Medium humanoid (maenad); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+4/19–20, masterwork iron greatsword) or +3 ranged (1d8+3/×3, composite longbow); SA outburst, psionics, psi-like ability; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Autohypnosis +8, Concentration +7.


FREE CITY OF TYR
The Caravan Gate
Merchant District
Caravan Way
The Ziggurat
Elven Market
Noble Quarter
Warrens
Shadow Square
The Brickyards
Traders' District
Preserver's District
Trader's District
The Stadium Gate
The Arena
Templar's Quarter
N
Free Gardens
High Bureaus
Golden Tower

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Psionic Shot, Psionic Weapon, Speed of Thought.

Languages: Common, Maenadi.

*Powers Known (*8 PP; save DC 12 + power level*):* 1st—*biofeedback, force screen, metaphysical weapon.*

Psi-Like Ability: 1/day—*energy ray* (DC 11). Manifester level 1st.

Possessions: +1 chitin armor, masterwork iron greatsword, composite (+3) longbow, 20 iron arrows.

Balic Adventures

PCs in Balic often find themselves embroiled in maenad clan politics, the machinations of Andropinis, or exploration of the Sea of Silt.

- A silt sailer known as the *First Lament* has been missing for a month and presumed destroyed by a Tyr-storm. But last night another ship-captain received a faint psionic *sending* from the *Lament*'s bosun, who described an island inhabited by strange giants. The PCs get shanghaied as part of the rescue mission.
- An elderly maenad woman comes to the PCs in Urik and asks for their protection from a rival clan of maenads who've declared a blood feud and will stop at nothing to see her dead. The rival clan left Balic several weeks ago and is believed to be traveling incognito.
- A maenad scholar doing research in Balic's libraries has found references to a mythical land that parallels the maenads' own tales of their original home. If the PCs confirm the truth of the matter, the maenads will begin construction of a massive portal to take them home. This draws the wrath of Andropinis, who isn't about to let his personal army walk away.

Tyr

The Free City of Tyr is the only city-state not under the control of a dragon-king. King Kalak died in a bid for immortality more than 300 years ago, and ever since a council of nobles and wizards has governed the city. Despite three major wars with Urik and countless covert attempts to seize the city and its valuable iron mines, Tyr has maintained its independence without the power of a dragon-king.

Demographics: Tyr's racial makeup is similar to those of the other Athasian city-states. But it is the only major settlement on Athas where wizards are welcome and arcane spellcasting is legal, so they're far more numerous in Tyr than elsewhere. Conversely, clerics are rarer because Tyr has no templars and only a few elemental clerics.

One of the first acts of the council after Kalak died was to free all the slaves. That grand gesture has eroded somewhat over the years. Trafficking in slaves is still forbidden, and no citizen of Tyr may own a slave. But visitors to the city retain ownership of their slaves, as do merchant houses with holdings in Tyr. Many of Tyr's noble families have long-term contract laborers that technically aren't slaves, but they order them around as if they were mere property. Still, the vast majority of Tyr's residents are free citizens.

Lands: Tyr squats at the foot of the Ringing Mountains, and the city-state's iron mines dot the surrounding mountains. A few mountain passes lead west to the Forest Ridge and eventually to the thri-kreen and pterran homelands. To the east are sandy wastes full of elf tribes, many of which have turned to banditry.

Settlements: Tyr has something the other city-states desperately want—iron for weapons and other tools—so four major strongholds guard the eastern approaches to the city: Fort Ianto, Fort Amber, Fort Skonz, and Fort Iron. To the northeast is Kled, a large town founded by former slaves shortly before the death of the dragon-king Kalak.

Tyr itself is heavily fortified as well, with a tall, curving wall of stone surrounding the city. It has Athas's largest gladiator arena and a massive ruined ziggurat haunted by the residual presence of Kalak the dragon-king.

Power Groups: Tyr's government is an oligarchic council that votes in secret and rules by decree. Immediately after Kalak's demise, members of each of the power groups in the city comprised the council, which almost immediately had to deal with an invasion from Urik. But over the centuries, the composition of the council has shifted toward two groups: Tyr's noble families and a group of preserver wizards known as the Veiled Alliance.

There are about a dozen major families that own the farmland surrounding Tyr, each with two or three branches. The nobles take their duty to Tyr very seriously; they know firsthand that if Urik puts Tyr under siege, Hamanu's army will be standing on their land. However, the noble families have a penchant for bickering and infighting. Many are unable to separate family rivalries from political rivalries.

The Veiled Alliance was once an underground movement of preserver wizards that had cells in each of the city-states. But since Tyr's independence, the city has become a safe haven for wizards and the Alliance's efforts in the other cities have dwindled. The Veiled Alliance still has agents in the other city-states, but they act more as a spy agency for Tyr than an underground movement for wizards specifically.

Beliefs: Because there's no state religion in Tyr, a wide array of beliefs flourish, from mystery cults to elemental worship to more esoteric philosophies.

While arcane spellcasting is legal, the Veiled Alliance keeps a sharp eye out for defilers. Because they are themselves wizards, they know firsthand the temptation to defile the land for extra power. But they also know that the good will of Tyr's citizens depends on wizards remaining free from the taint of defilement. In some ways, wizards visiting Tyr have less freedom than in other city-states because the Veiled Alliance is always watching for misdeeds.

Commerce: Iron is Tyr's chief export, and they're the only city-state with a surplus of it, so they can demand a great deal in exchange.

Goods made mostly or completely from iron are 10% cheaper to purchase in Tyr than elsewhere. Kled counts as a small city for the gp maximum when buying iron weapons or metal armor there. Tyr is also the only city-state where arcane magic items can be bought and sold openly.

Language: Because it's a free city, residents of Tyr are more likely to be multilingual than residents of other city-states. When they speak Common, they often mix in a word or two from another language.

Arts and Crafts: Many of Athas's finest smiths and metallurgists call Tyr home. The best craft weapons, armor, and jewelry made of silver or even gold. Beyond the lure of metal weapons, typical treasures from Tyr include gold earrings (1d10 × 100 cp), silver necklaces (3d6 × 100 cp), and bejeweled gold bracelets (1d6 × 1,000 cp).

Entertainment: The city of Tyr favors gladiator combat and other arena spectacles almost to the exclusion of other entertainments. At any given moment, there's a gladiator match going on somewhere in the city. Unlike other city-state's gladiators, Tyr's combatants are mostly free citizens. Tyr's gladiators earn the purse for a victory personally because they aren't owned by anyone. Top-notch gladiators have coaching staffs like any professional athlete, including psions who heal their battle damage quickly so they're ready to fight again.

Recently races of crodlus and kank-drawn chariots are becoming more popular, though they're scarcely less violent than outright gladiator fights.

Tyr Characters

Wizards naturally gravitate toward Tyr, as do former slaves and PCs who find slavery abhorrent. Because Tyr is more libertine than the other city-states, it attracts radical thinkers of all stripes.

Adventuring Tyrians: Many PCs from Tyr wish the other city-states were as enlightened as the City of Iron. This draws them into revolutionary activities elsewhere and puts them into conflict with the templars and dragon-kings of other states. And pterrans and thri-kreen are more likely to find their way to Tyr simply because it's the closest city-state to their homeland.

Fighters who battle as gladiators often come from Tyr as well, because Tyr has the most fervent fans (and the biggest purses) of the bloody sport.

Tyr tends to be welcoming of visitors, even if they look outlandish or behave strangely. Many Tyr citizens are immigrants or the descendants of freed slaves, so they tend to be open-minded about PCs from similar circumstances.

Character Development: Many of the gladiator stables—most of which are named after colors—have training centers in Tyr where aspiring gladiators can get weapons and hand-to-hand training from more experienced fighters. The Blues are particularly skilled at mounted combat, while the Greens excel an unarmed combat and the Reds with unusual weapons.

The Veiled Alliance recently opened the Alliance Academy, a school for aspiring wizards. Their first students are about to graduate. Most would-be arcanists still learn their craft as apprentices to a single wizard, not in an academic setting, however.

Character Names: Many Tyrian names sound Greek to modern ears. Common names include Abras, Aetolos, Celeas, Ericthus, Gurgas, Macletar, Periscus, Derephile, Merote, Phileas, Thaleia, Sophicrus.

Notable Tyrians

Cassamenus is a mid-level gladiator often matched up against promising newcomers. He shamelessly plays to the crowd, but he'll often whisper "just business, citizen" to new gladiators. While he's showy, he won't kill a helpless foe even if the crowd asks for it. Cassamenus was granted a similar reprieve in his first time in the arena, so he accords his foes the same courtesy. He won't pull any punches against a foe who's still fighting back, however.

Cassamenus, Mul Ftr6: CR 6; Medium humanoid (dwarf); HD 6d10+24; hp 57; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (2d4+9, *+1 cahulaks*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d4+9, *+1 cahulaks*); SA psionics; SQ mul traits; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +8, Intimidate +6.

Feats: Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (cahulaks), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Psionic Weapon, Weapon Focus (cahulaks), Weapon Specialization (cahulaks).

Languages: Common.

*Powers Known (*3 PP; save DC 11 + power level*):* 1st—*offensive prescience.*

Possessions: +1 iron cahulaks, +1 bronze half-plate, amulet of natural armor +1.

Tyr Encounters

Tyr is the most cosmopolitan of the city-states, so characters can run into almost anything on its streets. Unfortunately, crime in Tyr is higher than elsewhere because it's not an ultramilitant police state.

EL 5: These four half-elves are muggers and cutpurses. They'll take what they can off well-heeled pedestrians (like the PCs), and run pell-mell into Tyr's warrenlike alleys.

Tyr Cutpurses, Half-elf Rog1 (4): CR 1; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 1d6+1; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk +0 melee (1d6/18–20, bone rapier) or +1 ranged (1d4, bone dagger); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ half-elf traits, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will –1; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +4, Disguise +4, Hide +7, Listen +0, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +4, Tumble +7.

Feat: Dodge.

*Powers Known (*3 PP; save DC 10 + power level*):* 1st—*psionic charm.*

Languages: Common, Elven.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather, bone rapier, bone dagger, *potion of invisibility.*

Tyr Adventures

Because Tyr is such a hotbed of political activity, adventures there are more likely to involve intrigue than elsewhere on Athas.

- A massive sandstorm (as described in the Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) engulfs Fort Amber while the PCs are passing through. With most of the populace sheltered in various barracks, junior military officers launch a coup attempt, dashing from building to building and trying to kill or disable the fort's commanders.
- Multiple eyewitnesses have reported strange, reptilian apparitions lurking above Kalak's ruined ziggurat. The Tyr Council sends the PCs in to investigate—has Kalak himself returned?
- Tyr's Veiled Alliance sends the PCs to rescue an undercover agent in another city-state who's no longer responding to magical communications. They promise powerful arcane magic if the characters extract the agent without blowing her cover.

Beyond the Tablelands

While the seven city-states dominate their region, they aren't the only adventure sites on Athas.

Ringing Mountains and the Forest Ridge: The steep Ringing Mountains form the western edge of the Tablelands region. From a distance, their cliffs look nearly vertical and impossible to climb. But narrow roads do wind up to a few mountain passes that lead to what is possibly Athas's largest woodland: The Forest Ridge.

A great forest of firs, birches, and bamboo trees covers the western slopes of the Ringing Mountains. The air is moist in the Forest Ridge, and intermittent rain is a daily occurrence. While the Forest Ridge teems with life, it isn't all friendly. Tribes of feral, cannibal halflings stalk the few paths through the Forest Ridge, hunting any outsiders who trespass in their realm.

The halfling's large town of Ogo is the only known settlement in the Forest Ridge. While they are no less fierce than the halflings that hunt throughout the forest, the Ogo halflings are more accustomed to dealing with nonhalflings. In exchange for fine Urik obsidian, Ogo sends 200 halfling warriors to serve the dragon-king Hamanu every year.

Lost Scale and Pterran Vale: Two settlements—together comprising a large town—are the ancestral home of the pterrans (see *Dragon* #319). A hundred miles west of the Forest Ridge, Lost Scale and Pterran Vale sit amid scrub plains. Pterran Vale residents regard themselves as more civilized, living in huts and lodges made from the bones and hides of creatures they've hunted or raised themselves. The pterrans of Lost Scale are seminomadic, famous for riding pterraxes and scouring the plains for game.

Winter Nest: Along the Sea of Silt north of the Tablelands are the White Mountains, and nestled among them is the aarakocra small city of Winter Nest. The altitude is so great that the temperature is often cool enough to sustain ice. The city is disconcerting to landbound visitors, however, because it was designed for creatures who can fly from place to place.

Sea of Silt: Balic's silt sailers ply the shallower parts of the Sea of Silt, but even the best cartographers don't know how far east the sea extends, nor its exact northern and southern boundaries. While much of the sea is indeed a featureless plain of pearl-colored silt, many islands within the sea are ruins of bygone ages or the lairs of powerful monsters.

The Silt Sea's dominant feature is the Cerulean Storm, a persistent weather spot (like Jupiter's red spot) that is equal parts sandstorm and hurricane. The Cerulean Storm remains more or less stationary hundreds of miles east of Balic, but it periodically births Tyr-storms that head west at great speed, leaving torrential rains, massive sandstorms, and destructive winds in their wake.

Ledopolus: The twin cities of North and South Ledopolus guard the shores at a narrow point in the Estuary of the Forked Tongue. The ancestral home of the dwarves in the Tablelands, Ledopolus retains its independence, but its leaders dare not cross Andropinis or Lalali-Puy—even the most committed dwarves couldn't stand against the army of a dragon-king.

Between the two cities is the Island of Ledo, where the dwarves are building a massive fortress of unknown purpose. Ledo was inhabited by giants until the dwarves wiped them out about a hundred years ago. On other islands of the Silt Sea, their giant brethren are plotting revenge.

Ruined City-States: Kalidnay (south of Tyr), Bodach (amid the Great Ivory Plain), and Guistenal (on the shore of the Silt Sea) are city-states destroyed centuries ago. Kalidnay is now home to warring tribes of bandits and monsters. Bodach seems to spontaneously generate undead creatures of all kinds. The current inhabitants of Guistenal, once ruled by Dregoth before he became a lich, are unknown.

The Jagged Cliffs and Crimson Savannah: North of the tablelands and west of the Forest Ridge are a series of jagged, wind-whipped cliffs inhabited by halfling tribes that have built gliders and other airships to ascend and descend safely.

Those who safely descend the cliffs find themselves on the Crimson Savannah, named for the reddish soil found in these vast grasslands. The Crimson Savannah is a rich hunting ground for the Kreen Empire, a nation of more than a million thri-kreen and similar species.

The Last Sea: North beyond a gorge filled with lava and across a hundred-league plain of scorched earth is the Last Sea, a great body of salt water amid the Thunder Mountains. This place—spoken of often in folklore but rarely seen—is the largest remaining body of open water on Athas. A city known as Saragar sits on the shores of the Last Sea, ruled by psionic masters who don't even tolerate unspoken thoughts of dissent in their realm. Ω

Dark Sun Monsters

Part One

Written by David Noonan Art by Tom Fowler & Jeff Carlisle

Survival is at a premium on Athas, and one of the best parts of a Dark Sun game is watching your players squirm as they face a monster they've never seen before. The following new monsters can add to that sense of mystery and danger, as can monsters you create yourself. *Dungeon* #111 will contain even more monsters to use in a Dark Sun campaign.

Monster Types

Because psionics are so prevalent on Athas, animals can have psionic powers, so long as the powers aren't central to their threat as monsters. If an animal relies on psionics to survive in the world, build it as a magical beast, not an animal.

Mammals are very rare on Athas (beyond many of the PC races), so most animals found in the *Monster Manual* don't exist in a Dark Sun game. Only snakes and vermin will be familiar to your players. Most of the fauna that surrounds them should seem dangerous and alien. Dark Sun monsters look alien enough that it's sometimes hard to tell what creature type they are at a glance. A kank, for example, looks like a giant ant, but it's actually an animal and hence trainable as a mount.

Compiled List of Monsters

The following monsters are right at home in a Dark Sun campaign. Most appeared in previous editions of the Dark Sun campaign setting, while a few are new creations that are thematically appropriate to the desert world of Athas. The table also includes monsters introduced in this article and those to appear in *Dungeon* #111.

CR	Creature	Type	Source
1/8	Monstrous centipede, Tiny	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1/6	Hurrum, speckled	Vermin	*Dungeon* 110
1/6	Mulworm	Vermin	*Dungeon* 110
1/6	Ramphor	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
1/4	Critic lizard	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
1/4	Monstrous centipede, Small	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1/4	Monstrous scorpion, Tiny	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1/3	Giant fire beetle	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1/3	Jankx	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
1/3	Kes'trekel	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
1/3	Rainrunner	Elemental	*Dungeon* 111
1/3	Snake, Tiny viper	Animal	*Monster Manual*
1/2	Brain mole	Magical Beast	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
1/2	Earthdelver	Elemental	*Dungeon* 111
1/2	Firesnake	Elemental	*Dungeon* 111
1/2	Floater	Magical Beast	*Dungeon* 110
1/2	Monstrous centipede, Medium	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1/2	Monstrous scorpion, Small	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1/2	Snake, Small viper	Animal	*Monster Manual*
1/2	Windraptor	Elemental	*Dungeon* 111
1/2	Yallix	Animal	*Dungeon* 111
1/2	Z'tal	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
1	Baazrag	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
1	Cinderbrute	Elemental	*Dungeon* 110
1	Cloudscout	Elemental	*Dungeon* 110
1	Elemental, Small	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
1	Giant ant, worker	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1	Gith	Humanoid	*Dungeon* 110
1	Kaorti	Outsider	*Fiend Folio*
1	Monstrous centipede, Large	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1	Monstrous scorpion, Medium	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
1	Sandknight	Elemental	*Dungeon* 110
1	Snake, Medium viper	Animal	*Monster Manual*
1	Wavearcher	Elemental	*Dungeon* 110
1	Zhackal	Magical Beast	*Dungeon* 111
2	Azer	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
2	Belgoi	Humanoid	*Dungeon* 111
2	Erdlu	Animal	*Dungeon* 111
2	Folugub	Aberration	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
2	Giant ant, queen	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
2	Giant ant, soldier	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
2	Giant bombardier beetle	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
2	Kank	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
2	Monstrous centipede, Huge	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
2	Seskarran	Animal	*Dungeon* 111
2	Snake, constrictor	Animal	*Monster Manual*
2	Snake, Large viper	Animal	*Monster Manual*
2	Spinewyrm, wyrmling	Dragon	*Dungeon* 110
2	Thoqqua	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
3	Aoa, droplet	Outsider	*Fiend Folio*
3	Arrowhawk, juvenile	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
3	Crodlu	Animal	*Dungeon* 110
3	Crysmal	Elemental	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
3	Elemental, Medium	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
3	Ephemera, dusk beast	Outsider	*Manual of the Planes*
3	Fihyr	Aberration	*Monster Manual II*
3	Jhakar	Animal	*Dungeon* 111
3	Mephit (all)	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
3	Monstrous scorpion, Large	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
3	Rasclinn	Magical Beast	*Dungeon* 111
3	Salamander, flamebrother	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
3	Shadow	Undead	*Monster Manual*
3	Snake, Huge viper	Animal	*Monster Manual*
3	Spinewyrm, very young	Dragon	*Dungeon* 110

3	Swarm, locust	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
3	Tojanida, juvenile	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
3	Xorn, minor	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
4	Baazrag, boneclaw	Animal	DUNGEON 110
4	Energon, xag-ya	Outsider	*Manual of the Planes*
4	Fordorran	Magical Beast	DUNGEON 111
4	Giant stag beetle	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
4	Lirr	Magical Beast	DUNGEON 111
4	Pterrax	Animal	DUNGEON 110
4	Razorwing	Animal	DUNGEON 111
4	Swarm, centipede	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
5	Arrowhawk, adult	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
5	Cilops	Animal	DUNGEON 110
5	Crodlu, heavy	Animal	DUNGEON 110
5	Dune reaper drone	Magical Beast	DUNGEON 111
5	Elemental, Large	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
5	Energon, xeg-yi	Outsider	*Manual of the Planes*
5	Genie, djinni	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
5	Inix	Animal	DUNGEON 110
5	Psurlon, average	Aberration	*Monster Manual II*
5	Rast	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
5	Ravid	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
5	Snake, giant constrictor	Animal	*Monster Manual*
5	Spinewyrm, young	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
5	Tojanida, adult	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
5	Udoroot	Plant	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
6	Belker	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
6	Elemental air drake	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
6	Monst. centipede, Gargantuan	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
6	Salamander	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
6	Sand howler	Magical Beast	DUNGEON 110
6	Xill	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
6	Xorn	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
7	Chaos beast	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
7	Elemental, Huge	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
7	Flesh golem	Construct	*Monster Manual*
7	Genie, dao	Outsider	*Manual of the Planes*
7	Gray glutton	Magical Beast	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
7	Intellect devourer	Aberration	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
7	Invisible stalker	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
7	Mekillot	Animal	DUNGEON 110
7	Monstrous scorpion, Huge	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
8	Arrowhawk, elder	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
8	Elemental water drake	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
8	Genie, ereeti	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
8	Mastyrial	Animal	DUNGEON 111
8	Quetzalcoatlus	Animal	*Monster Manual II*
8	Shadow, greater	Undead	*Monster Manual*
8	Shield guardian	Construct	*Monster Manual*
8	Spinewyrm, juvenile	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
8	Swarm, hellwasp	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
8	Xorn, elder	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
9	Braxat	Monstrous Humanoid	*Monster Manual II*
9	Caller in darkness	Undead	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
9	Dune reaper warrior	Magical Beast	DUNGEON 111
9	Elemental, greater	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
9	Elemental smoke drake	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
9	Genie, marid	Outsider	*Manual of the Planes*
9	Monstrous centipede, Colossal	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
9	Psurlon, elder	Aberration	*Monster Manual II*
9	Roc	Animal	*Monster Manual*
9	Rukanyr	Aberration	*Fiend Folio*
9	Spinewyrm, young adult	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
9	Tojanida, elder	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
10	Clay golem	Construct	*Monster Manual*
10	Elemental fire drake	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
10	Monstrous scorpion, Gargantuan	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
10	Salamander, noble	Outsider	*Monster Manual*
11	Elemental, elder	Elemental	*Monster Manual*
11	Elemental earth drake	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
11	Gaj	Aberration	DUNGEON 111
11	Spinewyrm, adult	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
11	Stone golem	Construct	*Monster Manual*
12	Elemental ooze drake[1]	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
12	Monstrous scorpion, Colossal	Vermin	*Monster Manual*
12	Psion-killer	Construct	*Exp. Psionics Handbook*
12	Rampager[2]	Magical Beast	*Monster Manual II*
13	Elemental magma drake	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
13	Spinewyrm, mature adult	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
15	Great fihyr	Aberration	*Monster Manual II*
15	Nightmare beast	Magical Beast	*Monster Manual II*
15	Psurlon, giant	Aberration	*Monster Manual II*
15	Spinewyrm, old	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
16	Moonbeast[3]	Aberration	*Monster Manual II*
16	Stone golem, greater	Construct	*Monster Manual*
17	Spinewyrm, very old	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
18	Desert landwyrm	Dragon	*Draconomicon*
19	Spinewyrm, ancient	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
20	Megapede	Vermin	*Monster Manual II*
20	Spinewyrm, wyrm	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
22	Spinewyrm, great wyrm	Dragon	DUNGEON 110
23	Spirit of the land	Fey	*Monster Manual II*

1: *Elemental ooze drakes are called elemental silt drakes on Athas.*

2: *Rampagers are called so-ut on Athas.*

3: *Moonbeasts are called stalking horrors on Athas.*

Baazrag

Medium Animal
Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2
Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus wounding)
Full Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d6+1 plus wounding)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Wounding
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Skills: Hide +2, Listen +5, Move Silently +3, Spot +5, Survival +1*
Feats: Alertness, Track[B]
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary or swarm (2–16)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 3 HD (Medium), 4–6 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: —

This quadruped is covered with sandy gray bony plates. It has a ridge of spikes along its back and a spiked crest around its neck. Its powerful jaws ooze saliva as it looks at you with beady eyes.

The baazrag is an omnivore that forages alone by day and returns to the safety of its pack at night. On Athas, it's known for its dangerous bite and fierce disposition.

A baazrag is about 3 feet long and weighs from 40 to 60 pounds.

Combat

Baazrags are tenacious fighters, but they're cagey enough to retreat when they have no chance of winning. They wade into melee with fangs bared, relying on their heavy armor plating to protect them from their enemies. A swarm of baazrags focuses as many of their attacks as possible on one opponent, finishing it off before moving on to the next foe.

Wounding (Ex): An enzyme in the baazrag's saliva inhibits clotting. Any living creature damaged by a baazrag continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check (one check per wound) or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic (which stops bleeding in all wounds).

Skills: Baazrags have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Baazrag, Boneclaw

Large Animal
Hit Dice: 6d8+18 (45 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class: 18 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+13
Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d8+8)
Full Attack: Bite +9 melee (1d8+8)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Wounding
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6
Abilities: Str 21, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills: Hide –2, Listen +7, Move Silently +2, Spot +7, Survival +2*
Feats: Alertness, Run, Track[B], Weapon Focus (bite)
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary or pack (5–8)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 7–18 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: —

This hulking quadruped is covered with sandy gray bony plates. It has a ridge of spikes along its back and a spiked crest around its neck. Its powerful jaws ooze saliva as it looks at you with beady eyes.

Boneclaw baazrags hunt in packs and roam the sandy wastes, eating almost anything they can run down.

A boneclaw baazrag is about 8 feet long and weighs about 700 pounds.

Combat

Boneclaw baazrags maneuver to get flanking bonuses

whenever possible. They usually harry a single foe until it drops or is staggered, relying on their anticoagulant saliva to finish the victim off.

Wounding (Ex): An enzyme in the boneclaw baazrag's saliva inhibits clotting. Any living creature damaged by a boneclaw baazrag continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check (one check per wound) or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic (which stops bleeding in all wounds).

Skills: The boneclaw baazrag gains a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Cilops

Large Animal (Psionic)
Hit Dice: 8d8+32 (68 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 30 ft.
Armor Class: 17 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+16
Attack: Mandibles +11 melee (1d8+6)
Full Attack: Mandibles +11 melee (1d8+6) and antennae +7 melee (1d6+3 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Poison
Special Qualities: Psi-like abilities, scent, low-light vision
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
Skills: Climb +14, Listen +8, Spot +8, Survival +13
Feats: Alertness, Track, Weapon Focus (antennae)
Environment: Warm desert
Organization: Solitary or pack (2–5)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large), 10–24 HD (Huge)
This creature looks like an enormous centipede with long antennae, mandibles, and more than a dozen hooked legs.

The cilops is a peerless desert tracker sometimes trained by the templars of the city-states to hunt down escaped slaves and other fugitives. It's the Athasian equivalent of a bloodhound, although much more dangerous.

High-level druids sometimes choose a cilops as an animal companion. The cilops' natural ability to track and its psionic abilities are useful for druids hunting down those who would despoil what life remains in the wilds. An ordinary cilops lacks the intelligence and language skills to articulate what it learns with its *object reading* or *sensitivity to psychic impressions* powers. A cilops animal companion, on the other hand, is smart enough to share what it knows, and the druid can converse with it after casting *speak with animals*.

Cilops constantly roam in search of food. Many grow used to a particular kind of food (such as belgoi, humans, or kanks), and track these creatures down rather than seek out different prey.

A cilops is 10 to 15 feet long and weighs from 500 to 700 pounds.

Combat

In a fight, a cilops lashes out with its sharp mandibles and its paralyzing antennae. If it's particularly hungry, it makes a coup de grace attack against a paralyzed foe, but usually it waits until all threats have been dealt with before feeding.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 18, initial damage 1d4 Dex, secondary damage paralysis for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Psi-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*detect hostile intent, know direction and location*; 1/day—*object reading, sensitivity to psychic impressions*. Manifester level 3rd.

Skills: Cilopses have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. They also have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Training a Cilops

Cilops make poor steeds, but they can be trained to hunt down specific individuals, especially when presented with a set of tracks, a scent, or an object that it can use *object reading* on. To be trained, a cilops must have a friendly attitude

Low-Level Summonables (left to right): Cinderbrute, Cloudscout, Sandknight, Wavearcher

toward the trainer. Training a friendly cilops requires six weeks of work and a DC 25 Handle Animal check.

Cinderbrute

Small Elemental (Fire)
Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–3
Attack: Iron warhammer +2 melee (1d6+1 and 1d4 fire)
Full Attack: Iron warhammer +2 melee (1d6+1 and 1d4 fire)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Elemental traits, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, provides illumination as candle, vulnerability to cold
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8
Skills: Spot +4
Feats: Dodge
Environment: Elemental Plane of Fire
Organization: Solitary or squad (2–8)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 2–3 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —

This creature's ashen body is humanoid-shaped, but only in the abstract sense. It carries a battered iron shield on one arm and a warhammer of iron-shod stone in the other.

Cinderbrutes wander the Elemental Plane of Fire, making war on interlopers—and on each other if there aren't any invaders to fight. They're often summoned to the Material Plane, where they have an instinctive sense of who they're supposed to attack.

A cinderbrute is almost 4 feet tall and weighs about 50 pounds. Cinderbrutes speak and understand Ignan, but they limit their conversations to battlefield orders.

Combat

Cinderbrutes attack with their warhammers, which glow with heat when wielded by a cinderbrute.

Using a Cinderbrute's Gear: If summoned to the Material Plane, cinderbrutes give up their warhammer or shield only if their caster improves their attitude to friendly (they start out indifferent, so it's a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). The warhammer or shield disappears when the summoning spell ends, even if the cinderbrute was defeated before then.

Cloudscout

Small Elemental(Air)
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (4 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: Fly 30 ft. (6 squares) (perfect)
Armor Class: 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 11
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–4
Attack: Iron dagger +1 melee (1d3) or +3 ranged (1d3)
Full Attack: Iron dagger +1 melee (1d3) or +3 ranged (1d3)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Elemental traits, damage reduction 5/piercing, create daggers
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8
Skills: Listen +3, Spot +6
Feats: Alertness
Environment: Elemental Plane of Air
Organization: Solitary or squad (2–8)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 2–3 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —
This creature looks like a puff of smoke with batlike, smoky wings on each side. Two clots of particularly dark vapor look vaguely like eyes.

Cloudscouts patrol the vast skies of the Elemental Plane of Air, alert for intruders. Elemental clerics often summon them to the Material Plane as spies or combatants.

A cloudscout is about 3 feet across and weighs about a pound. It speaks and understands Auran.

Combat

Cloudscouts prefer to throw daggers at their foes from above, but they can also wield them in melee if they need to.

Create Daggers (Su): As a free action once per round, a cloudscout can form an iron dagger from its body. Such daggers disappear after 10 rounds.

Critic Lizard

Tiny Animal (Psionic)
Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.
Armor Class: 15 (+2 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–11
Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4–3)
Full Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4–3)
Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Psi-like abilities
Special Qualities: Low-light vision,
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1
Abilities: Str 5, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11
Skills: Balance +9, Climb +11, Hide +11, Listen +3, Spot +3
Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/4
Treasure: —
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —
These brightly scaled lizards have spines along their back that waver and pulse as the creature moves.

Critic lizards are common household pets on Athas, possessed of rudimentary psionics they use on behalf of creatures who feed and care for them. They are otherwise unaffectionate and aloof.

A critic lizard is a foot long when fully grown and weighs 3 to 4 pounds.

Combat

Critic lizards don't even like to hunt; they rely completely on their feeders for protection.

Psi-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*detect teleportation, detect psionics.* Manifester level 1st.

Skills: A critic liziard recieves a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They also have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Critic lizards use their Dexterity modifier to adjust Climb checks rather than their Strength modifier.

Crodlu

Crodlu	**Heavy Crodlu**
Large Animal	Large Animal
Hit Dice: 4d8+16 (34 hp)	6d8+30 (57 hp)
Initiative: +2	+1
Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14	18 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+11	+4/+13
Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d6+4)	+8 melee (1d6+5)
Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee (1d8+2) and rear claw +4 melee (1d6+2) (1d6+4) and bite +4 melee	2 claws +8 melee (1d6+5) and bite +6 melee (1d8+2) and rear claw +6 melee (1d6+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Pounce	Pounce, ram
Special Qualities: Low-light vision	Low-light vision
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2	Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10	Str 21, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 12
Skills: Hide +8, Jump +23, Listen +10, Spot +10	Hide +7, Jump +20, Listen +11, Spot +11
Feats: Multiattack, Run	Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack
Environment: Warm deserts	Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)	Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)
Challenge Rating: 3	5
Treasure: None	None
Alignment: Always neutral	Always neutral
Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large)	7–12 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: —	—

This upright lizard runs in packs across the desert plains on its powerful hind legs. Its forelimbs have sharp claws, and its beaklike snout opens as it breathes to reveal rows of teeth.

A distant relative of the erdlu (see *Dungeon* #111), the crodlu is a carnivore that uses its speed and claws to good advantage, often leaping onto its prey and tearing it apart.

A crodlu stands about 6 feet tall and weighs from 450 to 500 pounds. Illustrations of crodlus appear on appear on pages 37 and 60.

Combat

When hunting in packs, crodlus circle around their prey or send one part of the pack around to drive fleeing victims into the waiting claws of the rest of the pack.

Pounce (Ex): If a crodlu charges, it can make a full attack.

Skills: Crodlus have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Jump, Listen, and Spot checks.

Heavy Crodlu

The heavy crodlu subspecies is stronger and has a thicker hide than the common crodlu, but it isn't as fast. Heavy crodlus are 7 feet tall and weigh 500 to 600 pounds.

Ram (Ex): If a heavy crodlu charges, it can make a special bull rush attempt against the creature it charges. If the heavy crodlu pushes its target more than 5 feet and moves along with it, the heavy crodlu can make a pounce attack at the end of the bull rush.

Floater

Tiny Magical Beast (Psionic)
Hit Dice: 1d10 (5 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: Fly 20 ft. (4 squares) (perfect)
Armor Class: 14 (+2 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +1/–10
Attack: Tentacles +4 melee (1d3–3 plus poison)
Full Attack: Tentacles +4 melee (1d3–3 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Poison, psi-like abilities
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, fire vulnerability
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1
Abilities: Str 4, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills: Listen +5, Move Silently +15
Feats: Weapon Finesse
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 2 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —

This creature resembles a translucent jellyfish drifting in midair, slowly flexing the tentacles that hang beneath its vaguely spherical body.

The floater is a desert carrion-eater that preys on weak or disabled creatures, rendering them harmless with its poison or psionic attacks, then consuming them over the course of several days. They tend to be territorial with regard to other floaters, and they jealously guard a corpse they've been eating from any creature that's not obviously tougher than they are.

A floater is about 3 feet long, including its tentacles. It's effectively weightless while alive; a floater body only weighs a pound or two, and the lighter-than-air gases in their central bladders counteract this weight.

Combat

Floaters strike as quickly as they can, paralyzing any creature that poses a threat. If a fight goes poorly, floaters rise beyond the reach of their foes, launch an *ego whip*, and then flee.

Poison (Ex): A floater's tentacles deliver a paralytic poison that deals initial damage of 1d4 Dexterity and secondary damage of 1d4×10 minutes of paralysis (Fortitude DC 10 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Psi-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*detect psionics, demoralize* (DC 11), *ego whip* (DC 12). Manifester level 1st. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Fire Vulnerability (Ex): The gases that lift the floater are flammable, so the floater takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

Skills: Floaters have a +14 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Gith

Medium Humanoid (Gith)
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 14 (+2 leather armor, +2 heavy shield), touch 10, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/+2
Attack: Bronze carrikal +1 melee (1d8+1/×3) or claw +2 melee (1d4+2)
Full Attack: Bronze carrikal +2 melee (1d8+2/×3) or 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Psi-like abilities, rage 1/day
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Hide +4, Jump +16
Feats: Reckless Offense
Environment: Any underground
Organization: Solitary or warband (4–9) or warband (10–40 plus 1 4th-level wilder and 1d3 2nd-level barbarians)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: +2

Part elf, part reptile, this creature brandishes a bronze carrikal in a clawed hand. Its posture is stooped, with a bony ridge running up the center of its curved back.

The giths are one of the few creatures to make their homes underground on Athas. They often emerge onto the desert sands to raid the surface world.

A gith is about 5 feet tall, although it would be more than 7 feet tall if it stood up straight. It weighs from 160 to 180 pounds.

Combat

When a gith raiding party spies a likely target, its leaders (often wilders) make a psionic area attack, then the giths charge into melee.

Psi-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*control flames, matter agitation*. Manifester level 1st. The DCs are Charisma-based. Gith gain more psi-like abilities as they gain character levels, as detailed below under "Giths as Characters."

Rage (Ex): When raging, the gith has AC 12, 9 hp, and a carrikal attack of +4 (1d8+4).

Skills: Giths have a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

The gith barbarian presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Gith Society

Giths live in natural underground caves or rocky canyons which they guard with all manner of rockfalls and other natural traps. Some live in the underground ruins of bygone ages and are often uncomprehending of the wondrous treasures and lore available there. Giths tend to flee strong opposition on a raid, but they're tenacious in defense of their lairs.

The gith with the most powerful psionics rules the tribe, because gith have an inborn reverence for psionic power. Other positions of authority within the tribe are completely subordinate to the tribal chief.

Giths as Characters

Most giths are barbarians. Some of the most powerful giths are rangers, wilders, or neutral evil druids.

Gith characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Strength, –2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom.
- Medium size.
- A gith's base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision out to 60 ft.
- *Naturally Psionic*: Gith gain 2 bonus power points at 1st level.
- *Psi-Like Abilities*: Gith gain the following psi-like abilities.

Level	Psi-Like Abilities
1st–2nd	3/day—*matter agitation, control flames*
3rd–5th	3/day—*biofeedback*
6th–8th	3/day—*control body*
9th+	3/day—*psychofeedback*; 1/day—*telekinetic thrust*

Manifester level equal to 1/2 Hit Dice (minimum 1st). The save DCs are Charisma-based.

- *Automatic Languages*: Common, Gith. *Bonus Languages*: Dwarven, Pterran, Tariati, Belgoi.
- *Favored Class*: Barbarian.
- *Level Adjustment*: +2.

Hurrum, Speckled

Tiny Vermin
Hit Dice: 1/2d8+2 (4 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 15 ft. (3 squares)
Armor Class: 15 (+2 size, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–12
Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d2–4)
Full Attack: Bite +2 melee (1d2–4)
Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Psi-like abilities
Special Qualities: —
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0
Abilities: Str 3, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10
Skills: Climb +8, Hide +8
Feats: Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary or mating pair
Challenge Rating: 1/6
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —

This beetle-like insect, about the size of a human face, is a glossy black with rainbow speckles on its back. It flutters its miniscule wings against its carapace, producing a pleasing humming sound.

Hurrums are beetles known for their pleasant, musical wing-songs. Speckled hurrums, the largest species, have

Familiars (left to right): Floater, Critic Lizard, Kes'trekel, Speckled Hurrum, Mulworm, Jankx, Ramphor, Z'tal.

psionic powers that are likewise soothing for creatures who keep them as pets.

A speckled hurrum is about 5 inches long and weighs less than 1 pound.

Combat

Hurrums have a bite attack, but they rarely use it. The humming sound from the beating of a hurrum's wings attracts smaller insects for food, and hurrums use their psionic powers to pacify anyone big enough to eat them.

Psi-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*distract* (DC 11); 1/day—*telempathic projection*. Manifester level 1st. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Skills: Speckled hurrums have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. They use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks rather than their Strength.

Inix

Large Animal
Hit Dice: 8d8+40 (76 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 16 (–1 size, +7 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+18
Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d8+8) or tail slap +13 melee (1d6+4)
Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d8+8) and tail slap +8 melee (1d6+4)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 2
Skills: Listen +14, Spot +3
Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Power Attack
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary or pack (2–8)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large); 13–24 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

This armored lizard slowly sweeps the ground behind it with its long tail. It sniffs the air, wrinkling its snout to reveal rows of sharp teeth.

Inixes are often domesticated because they make strong, spirited mounts. They relish a good fight and are sometimes difficult to guide away from the battlefield. Because they sway dramatically from side to side when they run, Ride checks on inixes suffer a –4 penalty.

An inix is about 10 feet long, 5 feet high at the shoulder, and it weighs about 6,000 pounds.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for an inix is up to 918 pounds; a medium load 919–1,839 pounds; and a heavy load, 1,840–2,760 pounds. An inix can drag 13,800 pounds.

Combat

In a fight, an inix often lashes out with its tail against one foe while it bites another. It sometimes readies a tail sweep against foes who enter its threatened squares, surprising enemies who aren't expecting 10 feet of reach.

Jankx

Tiny Animal
Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 10 ft.
Armor Class: 16 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–11
Attack: Claws +4 melee (1d2–3 plus poison)
Full Attack: Claws +4 melee (1d2–3 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities: Str 5, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 5
Skills: Hide +6, Listen +14, Move Silently +6, Spot +6
Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Warm desert
Organization: Solitary, pack (2–9), or warren (10–100)
Challenge Rating: 1/3
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —

These furry creatures have golden hides, sleek bodies, and four short legs. Their bark is little more than a barely-audible high-pitched squeak

Jankxes live in burrow communities, from which they scour the desert surface at night for food. Their eyesight is barely adequate, but they are possessed of both keen hearing and a sensitive nose. Their golden pelts fetch a high price among clothiers and artisans, but jankxes are difficult to trap.

A jankx is about 1 foot tall when it's standing on its hind legs. It weighs from 5 to 7 pounds.

Combat

When defending their burrows, jankxes are fierce combatants. If attacked, a jankx's first instinct is to alert the rest of the burrow. The sight of dozens of jankxes pouring out of holes in the ground is often the last thing an unlucky jankx trapper sees.

Poison (Ex): The claws of the jankx are designed for digging and foraging, but they also have a retractable spur connected to poison sacs in their shoulders. The poison, usable once a day, deals initial and secondary damage of 1d4 Strength (Fortitude DC 10 negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Jankxes have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Listen checks, but a –4 racial penalty on Hide checks due to their golden pelts.

Kank

Large Animal
Hit Dice: 3d8+9 (22 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class: 15 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+9
Attack: Pincer +4 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)
Full Attack: Pincer +4 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Poison
Special Qualities: Low-light vision
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Skills: Jump +14, Listen +4
Feats: Endurance, Run
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary, pack (2–5) or herd (6–30)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —

This creature looks like a giant ant with thicker limbs and a placid disposition. Its eyes glitter with a degree of intellect, and it makes a soft, humming sound.

These antlike animals are perhaps the most important prevalent animals on Athas. The statistics above describe riding or dray kanks, which are taken from the warrior caste in a kank herd. Other kanks produce melon-sized globules of green honey that feed their young (if wild) or are harvested by their owners (if domesticated). Honey-producing kanks lack poison pincers.

Kanks are omnivorous grazers who'll eat nearly anything organic, seemingly without preference. When they die, they decompose messily within an hour, leaving behind a pile of foul-smelling organic sludge that's unappealing even to a starving denizen of Athas.

A kank is 4 to 5 feet tall at the shoulder, some 8 feet long, and weighs from 400 to 500 pounds.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a kank is up to 200 pounds; a medium load 201–400 pounds; and a heavy load, 401–600 pounds. A kank can drag 3,000 pounds.

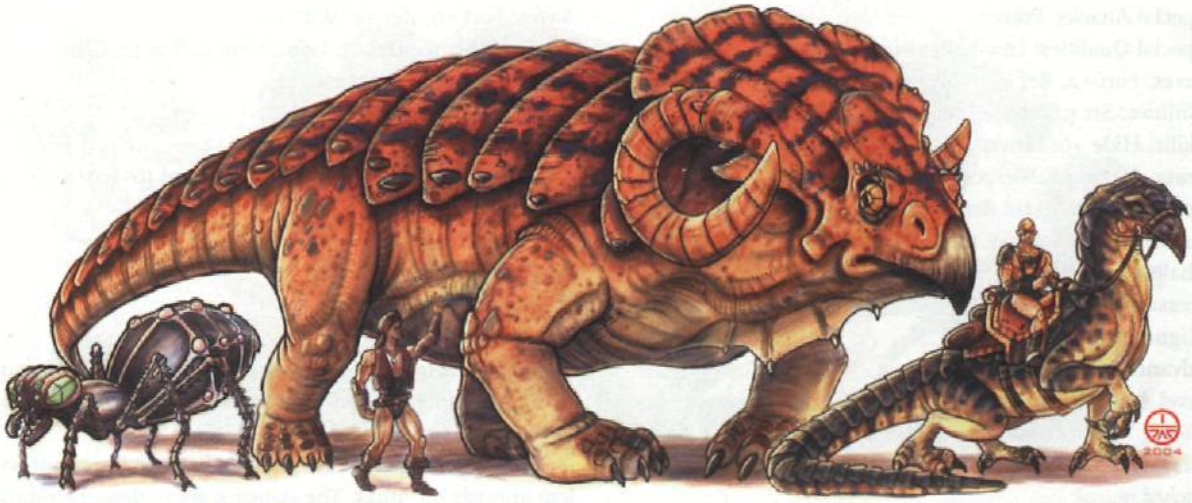
Combat

Kanks fight only when directly threatened, and even then only if they have poison pincers; honey-producing kanks run away unless cornered.

Poison (Ex): A kank has poisonous pincers that deal initial and secondary damage of 1d4 rounds of paralysis (Fort DC 13 negates).

Kes'trekel

Tiny Animal
Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)
Armor Class: 16 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–10
Attack: Talons +5 melee (1d4–2)
Full Attack: Talons +5 melee (1d4–2)
Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Aversion
Special Qualities: —
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities: Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14



Beasts of Burden (left to right): Kank, Mekillot, Inix.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +12
Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary, pair, or flock (3–18)
Challenge Rating: 1/3
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —

This scavenger bird soars high above the desert sands, its sharp eyes alert for potential meals. Its plumage varies from gray to black, except on its head where it's a bright crimson. Its talons look sharp, and its beak has rough serrations along the edges.

The kes'trekel is the most common carrion-eating bird in the deserts of Athas. By day, they search the vast barrens, looking for corpses to eat or weak creatures they can finish off. They're patient animals, willing to circle lazily overhead for hours while their next meal succumbs to heat, thirst, or another of Athas' dangers. They retreat to their well-hidden nests at night

A kes'trekel has a wingspan of three to four feet. It weighs between 1 and 2 pounds.

Combat

Kes'trekels rarely fight because their meals are generally dead or dying before they approach. They flee into the sky when faced with more serious threats.

Aversion (Ex): Individual kes'trekels aren't psionic, but a flock can collectively combine their miniscule minds to psionically warn creatures away from a kes'trekel meal. Creatures within 100 feet of four or more kes'trekels must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or gain an aversion to kes'trekels for 10 minutes. Affected creatures must stay at least 100 feet away from any kes'trekels, alive or dead; if already within 100 feet, they move away. A subject unable to move away, or one attacked by kes'trekels, is overcome with revulsion, which reduces the creature's Dexterity score by 4 points until the effect wears off or the subject is no longer within 20 feet of a kes'trekel. This ability is otherwise similar to *antipathy* (caster level 15th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills: Kes'trekels have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

Mekillot

Huge Animal
Hit Dice: 11d8+55 (104 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 18 (–2 size, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18
Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+26
Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d6+15) or tongue +16 melee (1d8+15)
Full Attack: Bite +16 melee (2d6+15) or tongue +16 melee (1d8+15)
Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with tongue)
Special Attacks: Improved grab, swallow whole
Special Qualities: Low-light vision
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +4
Abilities: Str 30, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7
Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8
Feats: Awesome Blow, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Domesticated or throng (2–5)
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 12–16 (Huge); 17–22 HD (Gargantuan)
Level Adjustment: —

This immense, squat lizard has curling horns to either side of its wide snout. Its long, snakelike tongue flickers in and out of its toothy maw.

The mekillot is a lizard frequently domesticated as a dray animal. Even a well-trained mekillot is unpredictable, and many occasionally make a meal of their handler.

A typical mekillot is about 25 feet long and weighs about 12,000 pounds. Larger specimens exist that grow up to 50 feet long.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a mekillot is up to 3,192 pounds; a medium load 3,193–6,384 pounds; and a heavy load, 6,385–9,600 pounds. A mekillot can drag 48,000 pounds.

Combat

An angry mekillot simply pushs foes out of the way unless it's hungry. If it wants a meal, it uses its prehensile tongue to grab a creature and drag it into its mouth. The mekillot can't bite in a round when it attacks with its tongue, or vice versa.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the mekillot must hit a creature one size category smaller than itself with its tongue attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the opponent in the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A mekillot can try to swallow a grabbed opponent at least two size categories smaller than itself by making a successful grapple check. A swallowed creature takes 2d8+10 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the mekillot's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 15). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

A mekillot's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Mulworm

Diminutive Vermin
Hit Dice: 1/4d8 (1 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 5 ft. (1 square), climb 5 ft.
Armor Class: 16 (+4 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–17
Attack: Bite +1 melee (1d2–5 plus disease)
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d2–5 plus disease)
Space/Reach: 1 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Acidic innards, disease
Special Qualities: Low-light vision
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities: Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 4
Skills: Climb +13, Hide +13
Feats: Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary or Host (2–100)
Challenge Rating: 1/6
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —

This white, segmented caterpillar leaves a faint trail of sticky residue behind it as it crawls.

Most mulworms remain in their caterpillar stage for months or years, depending on their diet of berries and tree-bark. Then they wrap themselves in cocoons while they transform into butterflies, which mate and die in a matter of days or weeks.

A mulworm is about 1 foot long and 2 inches in diameter. It weighs less than 1 pound.

Combat

Possessed of an ineffectual bite, the mulworm has nevertheless evolved some defenses to make predators regret their choice of meal.

Acidic Innards (Ex): The mulworm's internal fluids are highly acidic when exposed to the air. When a mulworm takes damage from a slashing or piercing weapon, creatures in the same square take 1d6 points of acid damage.

Disease (Ex): Mulworm rash—bite, Fortitude DC 10, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Cha. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Mulworms have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. They can use their Dexterity modifier on Climb checks.

Pterrax

Large Animal (Psionic)
Hit Dice: 6d8+18 (45 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 80 ft. (average)
Armor Class: 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+12
Attack: Bite +8 melee (1d6+4)
Full Attack: Bite +8 melee (1d6+4) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Pounce, rake 1d6+2
Special Qualities: Psi-like abilities, low-light vision
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8
Skills: Spot +10
Feats: Iron Will, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite)
Environment: Warm desert
Organization: Solitary or flock (6–10)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 8–10 HD (Large); 11–21 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

This large creature is a slender, tan-colored reptiloid with a pair of large wings stretched behind its forelimbs, which end in sharp claws. Its rear limbs have claws as well, and it beaky snout shows rows of teeth.

Pterraxes soar high in the skies of Athas, looking for prey to swoop down upon. They make good mounts if trained for that purpose.

A pterrax is about seven feet long, although its wingspan sometimes stretches as far as 20 feet. It weighs about 500 pounds.

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a pterrax is up to 300 pounds; a medium load, 301–600 pounds; and a heavy load, 601–900 pounds.

Combat

Pterraxes pounce on their prey, striking from above whenever they can. Against particularly small foes, they sometimes grapple and then take to the air with their hapless prey.

Pounce (Ex): If a pterrax dives upon or charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Psi-like Abilities (Sp): 1/day—*biofeedback, empathy*. Manifester level 3rd.

Training a Pterrax

A pterrax requires training before it can bear a rider in combat. To be trained, a pterrax must have a friendly attitude toward the trainer (this can be achieved through a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check). Training a friendly pterrax requires six weeks of work and a DC 25 Handle Animal check. Riding a pterrax requires an exotic saddle. A pterrax can fight while carrying a rider, but the rider cannot also attack unless he or she succeeds on a Ride check (DC 10).

Pterrax eggs are worth 2,000 cp apiece on the open market, while young are worth 3,000 cp each. Professional trainers charge 1,500 cp to rear or train a pterrax.

Ramphor

Tiny Animal
Hit Dice: 1/4d8 (2 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 60 ft. (average)
Armor Class: 15 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–13
Attack: Beak +4 melee (1d3–5)
Full Attack: Beak +4 melee (1d3–5)
Space/Reach: 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Low-light vision
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2
Abilities: Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6
Skills: Listen +5, Spot +15
Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating: 1/6
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —
Level Adjustment: —

This flyer has a long, sharp beak and flaps of gray skin underneath its forelimbs that act as wings.

The ramphor is a raptor that hunts large insects and small lizards in the Athasian wilderness. It relies on its powerful dives to catch its prey by surprise, spearing it with a sharp beak then carrying it aloft to be eaten.

A ramphor is about 18 inches long with a three- to four-foot wingspan. It weighs about 2 pounds.

Combat

The ramphor relies heavily on powerdives, charging unaware foes, then flying off. A cautious hunter, the ramphor rarely sticks around to tangle with a foe that survives its first attack.

Skills: Ramphors have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks, because their vision is so keen.

Sand Howler

Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 8d10+32 (76 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 17 (–1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+20
Attack: Bite +15 melee (1d10+12)
Full Attack: Bite +15 melee (1d10+12) and 2 claws +15 melee (1d6+8)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Paralyzing gaze
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 14
Skills: Listen +14, Spot +3
Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Power Attack
Environment: Warm desert
Organization: Solitary or herd (2–12)
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large); 13–24 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —
This lizardlike quaduped has two lower tusks more than a foot long and eight purplish eyes. Its upper back is covered with scales, but its limbs and underside is tawny fur.

The sand howler gets its name from the eerie yelps and howls it uses to communicate the location of prey to the rest of the pack. If more of its victims survived, they'd probably rename it for its paralytic gaze and massive jaws.

A typical sand howler is almost 10 feet long, 5 feet at the shoulder, and weighs 4,000 pounds.

Combat

Sand howlers are territorial hunters. They rarely stray from ground they know well. They often challenge an intruder by standing atop a ridge or sand dune and howling. If the intruder approaches, he faces the sand howler's paralyzing gaze, and then a downhill charge from the angry beast.

Paralyzing Gaze (Su): Paralyze foe for 1d4 rounds, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 16 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sandknight

Small Elemental (Earth)
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 20 ft.
Armor Class: 18 (+1 size, +6 natural, +1 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–1
Attack: Blood obsidian greatsword +4 melee (1d10+4)
Full Attack: Blood obsidian greatsword +4 melee (1d10+4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Elemental traits
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6
Skills: Listen +4
Feats: Dodge
Environment: Elemental Plane of Earth
Organization: Solitary or squad (2–8)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 2–3 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —
Composed entirely of sand and pebbles, this humanoid-shaped creature wields a massive sword made of glittering obsidian.

Sandknights are the footsoldiers of the Elemental Plane of Earth, endlessly marching across its stony plains and through its underground tunnels. They make war on anyone they have a chance of defeating, heedless of the danger.

Combat

Sandknights are unsubtle fighters. They simply charge their foes and attack with their swords.

Using a Sandknight's Gear: If summoned to the Material Plane, sandknights give up their swords only if their caster improves their attitude to friendly (they start out indifferent, so it's a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). The sword disappears when the summoning spell ends, even if the sandknight was defeated before then.

Spinewyrm

Dragon (Psionic)
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile, or young adult: solitary or clutch (2–5); adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient,wyrm, or great wyrm: solitary, pair, or family (1–2 and 2–5 offspring)
Challenge Rating: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 8; young adult 9; adult 11; mature adult 13; old 15; very old 17; ancient 19; wyrm 20; great wyrm 22.
Treasure: Triple standard

Spinewyrms by Age

Age	Size	HD (hp)	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Base Attack/Grapple	Attack
Wyrmling	T	3d12 (19)	13	10	11	8	13	10	+3/–4	+4
Very young	S	6d12 (39)	17	12	11	8	13	10	+6/+5	+10
Young	M	9d12+9 (67)	19	12	13	10	15	12	+9/+13	+13
Juvenile	L	12d12+24 (102)	23	12	15	10	15	12	+12/+22	+17
Young adult	L	15d12+30 (127)	25	14	15	12	17	14	+15/+26	+21
Adult	L	18d12+36 (153)	27	14	15	12	17	14	+18/+30	+25
Mature adult	H	21d12+63 (199)	27	14	17	14	19	16	+21/+37	+27
Old	H	24d12+72 (228)	29	16	17	14	19	16	+24/+41	+31
Very old	G	27d12+108 (283)	31	16	19	16	21	18	+27/+49	+33
Ancient	G	30d12+150 (345)	33	16	21	16	21	18	+30/+53	+37
Wyrm	G	33d12+165 (379)	35	18	21	18	23	20	+33/+57	+41
Great wyrm	G	36d12+216 (450)	37	18	23	20	23	22	+36/+61	+45

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: Wyrmling 4–5 HD; very young 7–8 HD; young 10–11 HD; juvenile 13–14 HD; young adult 16–17 HD; adult 19–20 HD; mature adult 22–23 HD; old 25–26 HD; very old 28–29 HD; ancient 31–32 HD; wyrm 34–35 HD; great wyrm 37+ HD

Level Adjustment: Wyrmling +3; very young +4, young +5, juvenile +5, others —

This sinuous giant snake slithers across the sky, the many spines on its chitinous, segmented shell whistling as they slice through the wind.

The spinewyrm is the closest thing Athas has to a traditional D&D dragon. It has no breath weapon—or wings or legs for that matter—but it has dangerous melee attacks and psionic powers.

Spinewyrms float high in the skies over Athas, swooping down when they see a tasty meal or something else that strikes their fancy. They keep their lairs atop forbidding rock outcroppings, slippery sand dunes, or other hard-to-reach places.

Combat

Before a fight begins, a spinewyrm uses its psionic powers to make itself stronger and to learn more about its adversaries. It then dives into battle, trying to constrict and use its natural weapons. Larger spinewyrms constrict particularly tenacious foes and fly hundreds of feet into the air before dropping them.

Because a spinewyrm has no claws or wings, its full attack action functions differently than most dragons. A spinewyrm's primary attack is a bite with its massive, powerful jaws. Spinewyrms gain Improved Natural Attack (bite) as a bonus feat, and thus the damage they inflict is increased by one step, as if it were one size category larger than the damage indicated for a dragon's bite on page 69 of the *Monster Manual*. Spinewyrms always apply 1.5 times their Strength bonus to damage done with their bite, even when they make a full attack action. Spinewyrms have a secondary attack—lashing with the spines that cover their long, snake-like bodies. As spinewyrms grow larger, they can make more attacks with their spines. The number of attacks they can make with a full attack action and the damage inflicted is listed on the table, and includes one-half the spinewyrm's Strength bonus.

Detachable Spines (Ex): An opponent hit by a spinewyrm's spine (whether in melee, during a grapple, or during a spine volley) must succeed on a Reflex save or have the spine break off in his or her flesh. A lodged spine imposes a –1 penalty on attacks, saves, and checks; penalties for multiple spines stack. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Spinewyrm Abilities by Age

Age	Speed	Initiative	AC	Special Abilities	Manifester Level	SR/PR
Wyrmling	40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)	+0	14 (+2 size, +2 natural)	—	—	—
Very young	40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)	+1	17 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural)	—	—	—
Young	40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)	+1	19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)	—	—	—
Juvenile	40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)	+1	21 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +11 natural)	—	—	16
Young adult	40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)	+2	25 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)	Damage reduction 5/magic	1st	18
Adult	40 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)	+2	28 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +17 natural)	—	3rd	20
Mature adult	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect)	+2	30 (–2 size, +2 Dex, +20 natural)	Damage reduction 10/magic	5th	22
Old	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect)	+3	34 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +23 natural)	—	7th	25
Very old	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect)	+3	35 (–4 size, +3 Dex, +26 natural)	Damage reduction 15/magic	9th	27
Ancient	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect)	+3	38 (–4 size, +3 Dex, +29 natural)	—	11th	28
Wyrm	40 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect)	+4	42 (–4 size, +4 Dex, +32 natural)	Damage reduction 20/magic	13th	29
Great wyrm	40 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect)	+4	45 (–4 size, +4 Dex, +35 natural)	—	15th	31

Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Spine Attacks	Spine Damage	Spine Save	Impale Damage	Frightful Presence DC
+3	+3	+4	1	1d3	DC 11	2d3	—
+5	+6	+6	1	1d4+1	DC 14	2d4+2	—
+7	+7	+8	2	1d6+2	DC 15	2d6+4	—
+10	+9	+10	2	1d8+3	DC 17	2d8+6	—
+11	+11	+12	3	1d8+3	DC 19	2d8+7	DC 19
+13	+13	+14	3	1d8+4	DC 21	2d8+7	DC 21
+15	+14	+16	4	2d6+4	DC 22	4d6+8	DC 23
+17	+17	+18	4	2d6+4	DC 25	4d6+8	DC 25
+19	+18	+20	4	2d8+5	DC 26	4d8+10	DC 27
+22	+20	+22	5	2d8+5	DC 28	4d8+11	DC 29
+23	+22	+24	5	2d8+6	DC 30	4d8+12	DC 31
+26	+24	+26	6	2d8+6	DC 32	4d8+13	DC 34

A spine can be removed safely with a DC 20 Heal check as a standard action; otherwise, removing a spine deals 1d6 points of damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a spinewyrm must hit a creature one size smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to impale the opponent on its spined body.

Impale (Ex): A spinewyrm deals the damage listed in the spinewyrm table with a successful grapple check. The spinewyrm's foe must also make a Reflex save or have a spine embedded in his or her flesh.

Powerful Bite (Ex): All spinewyrms gain Improved Natural Attack (bite) as a bonus feat.

Psionics (Sp): A spinewyrm knows and manifests psionic powers as a psion of the level indicated in the spinewyrm table, except that it uses Charisma to set save DCs and earn bonus power points. Spinewyrms can choose powers from the psion/wilder list and the egoist list.

Spine Volley (Ex): With a snap of its tail, a spinewyrm can loose a volley of spines as a standard action (make a ranged attack roll for each spine). The number of spines it can fire is equal to its age category. This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature grows new spines quickly, and it can use this attack once every 1d4 rounds as a result.

Immunities (Ex): A spinewyrm is immune to sleep and paralysis effects.

Blindsense (Ex): Spinewyrms can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents the spinewyrm can't actually see still have total concealment against the spinewyrm.

Keen Senses (Ex): A spinewyrm sees four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light.

Wavearcher

Small Elemental (Water)
Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.
Armor Class: 13 (+1 size, +2 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 11
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–2
Attack: Composite longbow +3 ranged (1d6+2)
Full Attack: Composite longbow +3 ranged (1d6+2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: —
Special Qualities: Elemental traits, fast healing 5, create arrows
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –1
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills: Listen +3
Feats: Point-Blank Shot
Environment: Elemental Plane of Water
Organization: Solitary or squad (2–8)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 2–3 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —

This liquid creature has a humanoid-shaped torso, head, and arms, but its lower body is a foamy sea wave. It carries a bow made of coral.

Wavearchers range far and wide across the Elemental Plane of Water, hunting anything they think they can slay with their arrows. They're often summoned to the Material Plane to fight on behalf of elemental clerics.

Combat

Wavearchers don't engage in melee, and instead fire arrows from a distance.

Create Arrows (Su): As a free action once per round, a wavearcher can pluck an iron arrow from its body. Such arrows disappear after 10 rounds.

Using a Wavearcher's Gear: If summoned to the Material Plane, wavearchers give up their longbow or arrows only if their caster improves their attitude to friendly (they start out indifferent, so it's a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check). The longbow disappears when the summoning spell ends, even if the wavearcher was defeated before then.

Z'Tal

Small Animal
Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 15 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple: +0/–2
Attack: Scales +4 melee (1d4)
Full Attack: Scales +4 melee (1d4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Scream
Special Qualities: Low-light vision
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills: Jump +10, Listen +3, Spot +3
Feats: Endurance
Environment: Warm deserts
Organization: Solitary, pair, or leap (5–20)
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 2 HD (Small)
Level Adjustment: —

This small, brown lizard hops up and down on its hind legs, its glossy scales shining in the sun.

The z'tal is a desert lizard known for its proclivity to hop from place to place and for the alarming scream it uses to disable predators.

A z'tal is about 2 feet tall and weighs from 5 to 8 pounds.

Combat

An herbivore, the z'tal only fights when it must. When confronted by one of the desert's many predators, a z'tal shrieks an alarm, then hops away. If cornered, the z'tal attacks by lashing its sharp-edged scales against a foe.

Scream (Ex): Any creature other than other z'tals within 10 feet of a screaming z'tal must succeed at a DC 10 Will save or suffer a –2 penalty to skill checks for one minute. Those who save against the z'tal's scream are immune to further z'tal screams for the rest of the day.

Skills: Z'tals have a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Ω